

"TRAFFIC"

By

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Based on the miniseries "Traffik"

By

Simon Moore

EXT. COLUMBUS, OHIO - DAY

The state capital of Ohio. It's an impressive building for a city this size.

SUPERTITLE: COLUMBUS, OHIO - STATE CAPITAL

INT. OHIO STATE SUPREME COURT - DAY

In chambers striving for august, JUSTICES listen to a lawyer MR. RODMAN, argue his case before the highest court in Ohio. Mr. Rodman enjoys the sound of his own voice.

MR. RODMAN

This informant, paid by the police, using taxpayers dollars to continue his felony drug habit, was the link which allowed police to raid a private farm. A working farm. A farm where honest Americans make their living.

One particular justice, ROBERT WAKEFIELD, younger than the others, is clearly bemused by this performance.

MR. RODMAN

The government, in its haste, has employed an army of criminals whose allegiance to the truth is, at best, questionable --

Judge Wakefield interrupts --

ROBERT

Mr. Rodman...it's too bad your client didn't show as much sense in choosing

what he planted as he did in choosing his attorney...

A polite chuckle from the justices --

ROBERT

Lately the only variation I'm hearing in your argument is the name of the client. And you can sit there all day arguing the ins and outs of Illinois v. Gates, but you aren't going to convince me that this country has not sanctioned the use of anonymous informants.

(beat)

Furthermore, there is no sacred protection of property rights in the United States. When you make the decision to have marijuana on your farm, whether it's one joint or an acre of plants, your property can be seized and your property can be sold.

MR. RODMAN

I'm sorry the court finds my argument repetitious.

ROBERT

Mr. Rodman, may I offer a piece of advice? The next time you argue this point before this court, regardless of my whereabouts, I recommend you have something up your sleeve other than your arm.

INT. ROBERT'S CHAMBERS - DAY

The office is marble and dark wood. A young CLERK, black, 29, enters carrying an oddly-shaped gift. They both look at it.

CLERK

What do you think it is?

ROBERT

Depends who it's from.

CLERK

(reading the card)

Your friends at Warren, Putnam and Hudson.

ROBERT

You can learn a lot about somebody from this stuff. Three categories: you like me, you hate me, you want something from me.

(re: the elaborate box)

Definitely third category.

CLERK

What would a law firm want from the new drug Czar?

ROBERT

Depends on the state.

CLERK

(checks)

Arizona.

ROBERT

Medicinal marijuana initiative.

(beat)

Or am I being cynical?

They both laugh. Robert reaches up and pulls a bottle of Scotch from a shelf. He pours a couple of fingers in two glasses.

CLERK

Maybe there's a book in it.

The clerk takes one of the glasses.

ROBERT

Not by me.

They toast and drink.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Robert exits, trailed by a small group of reporters. He gets into a car being driven by two security TYPES.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Robert sits in a business class window seat.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

An expensive hotel. Robert Wakefield stands at the window, looking at the view of our nation's capital.

SUPERTITLE: WASHINGTON D.C.

ON THE TABLE

The remnants of a meal. It was a steak and a small caesar salad. The wine glass is half-empty.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON ROBERT

In front of the mirror now, trying on a dark, tasteful jacket.

CLOSER

On Robert in the same position, only now we are in HIS HOME. It's daytime, and his wife BARBARA is helping him into this same jacket. As her hands dust the lint off his shoulders

WE MATCH CUT TO:

ROBERT

In the hotel rooms, making the same motions. Satisfied, he straightens, then turns to look at himself.

OMITTED

ANGLE ON ROBERT

Back at the hotel room window now. Reaches to the table and lifts the wine glass.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

This is the middle of nowhere. Scrub cactus and dust and a heartless sun.

SUPERTITLE: MEXICO - TWENTY MILES SOUTHWEST OF TIJUANA.

A broken down-looking Police Sedan is parked on the side of the road. It seems abandoned except there are TWO MEN inside.

INT. POLICE SEDAN - DAY

Two Mexican men, State Police officers, JAVIER RODRIGUEZ, 30's, and MANUEL "MANOLO" SANCHEZ, 20's, wearing jeans, knock-off Polo shirts, and cowboy boots, wait patiently in the

car.

JAVIER

I had that dream again.

A long pause.

MANOLO

Which one?

Another long pause.

JAVIER

Where my mother's suffocating.

They continue to wait until there is the sound of a JET ENGINE. It grows LOUDER as it approaches.

EXT. THE POLICE SEDAN - DAY

The shadow of a large plane crosses the desert floor. Then, an old DC-3 flies fifty feet above the Police Sedan.

INT. POLICE SEDAN - DAY

They watch the plane disappear over a small rise in the desert. They look at each other and wait some more.

EXT. MEXICAN DESERT - LATER

From the direction of the landing strip, a moving van lumbers down the road, two TEENAGERS in the cab.

INT. POLICE SEDAN - DAY

Javi and Manolo watch the moving van approach. Javi reaches under the seat and picks up a bubble flasher. He rolls down the window and plants it on the roof. He flips the switch.

Nothing happens. He jiggles the wire and the siren BURPS and the light flashes. Manolo and Javi step from the car, smiling.

EXT. MEXICAN DESERT - DAY

The moving van slows to a stop. Javi approaches. The DRIVER unhurriedly rolls down the window.

DRIVER

Is there a problem?

JAVIER

No. There's no problem.

The driver hesitates a confused beat then reaches for his wallet.

DRIVER

Okay. I see. How much do you want?

The driver pulls a wad of bills. Javi shakes his head.

DRIVER

You want more than this?

Javi shakes his head. The driver exchanges a look with his partner.

DRIVER

You want something else?

Javi smiles. The driver gets out and walks to the back of the truck. He opens the rear door. There are neatly-stacked crates marked with a SCORPION logo and "911." He reaches into one of them and pulls out a tightly-sealed package also with the scorpion stamped on it. He turns to see Javi with his gun drawn.

Manolo, at the passenger side, has also drawn his gun and is motioning the partner to move to the back of the truck.

JAVIER

Drop the package. Put your hands behind your head. You're under arrest.

The driver hesitates. He starts to comply then looks at Javi and Manolo.

DRIVER

I don't understand. I think there must be some mistake.

JAVIER

No, there's no mistake.

Javi motions to Manolo who cuffs both teenagers. The driver begins spewing OBSCENITIES under his breath. Javi puts the driver in the front of the Shadow. Manolo follows in the moving van.

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. DIRT ROAD - MEXICO - LATER

The truck follows the Shadow down a desert road.

Suddenly, from behind, four armored SUV's with tinted windows appear, closing fast.

The SUV's force both vehicles off the road where they pull to a stop. A long beat as hot wind blows desert detritus past the truck.

Finally, the SUV doors open and FEDERAL POLICE OFFICERS surround them like a SWAT team.

The passenger door of the lead SUV opens and GENERAL ARTURO SALAZAR, 50's, a squat, powerful presence in a perfectly pressed uniform gets out and approaches Javi.

SALAZAR

(to Javier)

What's your name?

JAVIER

Javier Rodriguez.

SALAZAR

Well, Javier Rodriguez, you've done a very good job, but we'll take care of it from here.

Javier stares into the implacable reflection of his sunglasses. In the distance, the DC-3 takes off and ROARS over their heads.

SALAZAR

We've been following these Narco-traffickers for some time but had not been able to bring them to justice.

(to his men)

Put the prisoners in the car.
Impound the truck.

The men follow Salazar's orders.

SALAZAR

(to Javi)

One question. How did you find about

this?

JAVIER
An informant.

SALAZAR
What is the name of your informant?

JAVIER
(beat)
It was an anonymous tip.

Salazar looks at Javi a beat.

SALAZAR
(to his men)
For a State Police officer, you're
very well informed. Let's go.

MOMENTS LATER
Javi and Manolo watch the convoy of
vehicles drive away.

Javier lights a cigarette.

MANOLO
Wasn't that General Salazar?

JAVIER
Yeah.

MANOLO
What's he doing up here?

JAVIER
I don't know. Something.

They start for their car.

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. DEL MAR SELF-STORAGE - DAY

SUPERTITLE: SAN DIEGO

Two men, RAY CASTRO, 30's, proud, ambitious, and MONTEL
GORDON, 40's, suspicious of everyone including himself and

always, always the smartest guy in the room, walk from a Lincoln Towncar toward a dumpy office. Castro is talking under his breath --

CASTRO

No telltales. Nothing to read.
Not touching my face. Not even
blinking. No giveaways.

(beat)

How're you feeling?

GORDON

(keyed up)

I feel good.

CASTRO

No more pissant basin league bullshit
for us, hunh?

GORDON

Nope.

Castro stretches his arms, swings them around.

CASTRO

Limbering up, gonna stay loose, keep
it all together. Take this
motherfucker down.

They reach the door to the office. Gordon looks at Castro,
then turns the handle.

CASTRO

Showtime.

INT. OFFICE, DEL MAR SELF-STORAGE - DAY

It's a cluttered, rundown working office unusual only in the
extent of its ordinariness. A SECRETARY goes about her
business like a somnambulist. CLERKS shuffle and file.

Castro switches into Spanish --

CASTRO

(in Spanish)

Good afternoon, ladies, gentlemen.
We're looking for Eduardo Ruiz. We
have a two o'clock appointment.

INT. OFFICE, DEL MAR SELF-STORAGE - LATER

In a back alcove, Castro and Gordon sit across a cheap table from EDUARDO RUIZ, 40's, an entrepreneur in an expensive suit and bad hairpiece. They are waiting.

RUIZ

You ever buy a quarter ton? Not many people have.

Another "businessman" enters from another door and whispers in Ruiz's ear, then leaves again.

RUIZ

So, it's worth the wait, right? What can I do? Rent a Huey? Have an airlift? It's not like you can put it in a condom up some mule's asshole, right? How many peasants would that take? A line stretching from here to Mexico City --

GORDON

Nobody said shit, Eduardo --

One of Ruiz's hands dips under the desk where we see a handgun is holstered on the underside.

RUIZ

Relax. We're waiting, that's it.

CASTRO

Hey, you want to hear a joke? I got a joke. Why do women wear makeup and perfume?

GORDON

Chill out --

CASTRO

It's a funny fuckin' joke and it's quick. Why do women wear makeup and perfume?

RUIZ

I don't know.

CASTRO

'Cause they're ugly and they stink.

Castro laughs uproariously.

INT. DEA SURVEILLANCE SPACE - DAY

ON FUZZY SURVEILLANCE VIDEO: Castro laughing. Ruiz politely smiling, one of his hands hidden by the table.

GORDON

Man, you never been close enough to a woman to know how she smells.

DEA AGENT (V.O.)

What's his hand doing? Watch his hand. Anybody? I don't like the hand.

IN THE OFFICE

The room is filled with crappy surveillance equipment. DEA AGENTS, in DEA logo'd outerwear, jiggle a monitor fuzzily displaying the view from another hidden camera: Gordon and Ruiz around the cheap table.

DEA AGENT

This is ridiculous this fucking thing.

(taps monitor)

Look at this shit -- the first television transmission. I had better shit when I was the AV guy at junior high, swear-to-God.

ANOTHER DEA AGENT

Come on, Castro, pay attention. Watch his damn hands.

ON THE MONITOR

Another "businessman" enters the office and whispers in Ruiz's ear.

RUIZ (ON MONITOR)

Soon.

Another AGENT peers out a window through binoculars.

HIS POV: THE EXTERIOR OF THE OFFICE WHERE CASTRO, GORDON, AND RUIZ TALK.

EXT. DEL MAR SELF-STORAGE, SAN DIEGO - DAY

A BLUE VAN makes a slow turn into the parking lot.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

TWO FBI AGENTS, in jackets reading "FBI," hide on an opposing roof. They look through high-powered binoculars. Binocular

POV: THE BLUE VAN TURNING INTO THE PLAZA.

FBI AGENT #2

All right, here we go. The blue van.

HIS BINOCULAR POV DETECTS THREE UNMARKED CARS DISCREETLY FOLLOWING THE VAN.

FBI AGENT #2

Three unmarked vehicles.
(picks up walkie)
Three unmarked vehicles accompanying.

The unmarked cars split up and one turns into the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant. The other circles around the back of a building.

FBI AGENT #2

It's local. Local or Customs. Oh, man, I don't know. Looks like the cavalry.

FBI AGENT

This is our show. Ah, man. I don't want to share this one.

INT. OFFICE, DEL MAR SELF-STORAGE - CONTINUOUS

Through the window Ruiz, Gordon and Castro watch the van disappear into the bay of a storage unit. A man is pulling down the door behind it when three unmarked squad cars ROAR into the lot, surrounding the unit, officers exit the cars with their guns drawn -- Gordon and Castro stare in disbelief.

Ruiz FIRES the gun under the desk which hits Gordon full in the chest, knocking him backwards.

Ruiz's men run into the room pulling guns.

Castro dives and pulls his weapon, firing at Ruiz's men, hitting both of them. Ruiz bolts through another door. Castro pursues, talking into his shirt collar --

CASTRO

Agent down. Repeat, agent down.

Gordon gets slowly to his feet, shaking off the blast to his

Kevlar, and runs after them.

EXT. DEL MAR SELF-STORAGE - DAY

The DEA are shooting at the men inside the storage unit who are shooting back.

From all over the stake-out location, DEA AGENTS emerge firing their weapons. An equal number of FBI AGENTS emerge firing in return. Nobody was aware of the other's presence.

It's CHAOS, a clusterfuck of law-enforcement zeal with three competing sets of good guys shouting through BULL-HORNS, GUNSHOTS and SCREAMING.

Ruiz breaks through the corner of the lot, cutting between two buildings. Castro emerges and chases him.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Ruiz runs out the back of the storage company. He cuts between parked cars, heading for The Fun Zone, a kiddie restaurant.

INT. THE FUN ZONE - DAY

Castro enters The Fun Zone. There's a cardboard cutout of SPASTIC JACK, a beloved comedy figure who looks like a rabbit version of Jar Jar Binks, promoting the "Special Edition" glass: "Collect All Four." There's an enclosure filled with colored plastic balls.

The restaurant is empty except for a CLOWN filling out a time card. The clown stands.

CLOWN

Hey dudes, we're not open yet.

Castro makes a motion for him to be quiet and keeps moving toward the room of colored balls.

Gordon enters the restaurant and follows him. An ANIMATRONIC BAND starts to play a SONG.

Gordon sees a half-hidden foot buried underneath the plastic balls at the far end of the room.

He takes careful aim and FIRES.

Ruiz SCREAMS and sits up. Castro pounces on him, disarming him, and roughing him up.

EXT. THE FUN ZONE - DAY

Castro and Gordon shove Ruiz into the sunlight. They wait while their eyes adjust.

RUIZ

Take me to the hospital. I'm bleeding to death.

Castro shoves him forward.

ACROSS THE PARKING LOT

DEA has opened the back of the van where a quarter-ton of cocaine is spilling out onto the pavement.

CUT TO:

INT. GUEST HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A bong hit is expelled into the air. In the living room of a comfortable, preppy guest house, private school TEENAGERS party and hang-out: cigarettes in ashtrays, beer and bong on the coffee table, loud MUSIC.

SUPERTITLE: CINCINNATI, OHIO

The TV is on with the sound off. The curtains are closed.

The four boys wear school blazers with their ties pulled askew, the three girls' clothing are also identical. Some sit on couches, some on the floor. They are stoned.

One intense-looking boy, SETH ABRAHAMS, 17, wild curly hair and the attitude of a young Coleridge, and a girl, CAROLINE WAKEFIELD, 16, really sixteen which means she looks about 12, pretty and flirtatiously irreverent, sit at a desk in front of a Powerbook G-3 playing an on-line trivia game.

Seth speaks rapidly and precisely.

SETH

Father of Greek tragedy? Anyone?
Okay, Aeschylus it is.

(hits keys)

His trilogy? The Oresteia. I mean this is beautiful, can anyone stop the Seth Machine?

(hits keys)

Score. Thank you. Madmax from Omaha

we own you. And Tragedy is closed out.

Seth leans over and snorts a line of coke from a mirror. He hands it to Caroline who effortlessly does one.

CAROLINE

Entertainment. The Susan Lucci section or Banal Love Songs of the Nineties?

Seth looks at her. He has a crush.

SETH

Banal Love Songs it is.
(hits keys)
Hey, you wanna try something?

She nods. They both take a swig of beer. He takes her hand pulling her past the stoned people on the couch --

IN THE KITCHEN

Seth takes out a box of baking soda. He tears off a square of aluminum foil. He takes out a spoon. Caroline watches as he dumps a small amount of cocaine into the spoon. He adds a pinch of baking soda. He puts in a few drops of water. Stirs it around with the heel of a lighter. Then holds the flame under the spoon.

CAROLINE

What are you doing?

SETH

(concentrating)
Just watch.

He watches the substance in the spoon as it swirls and bubbles, then separates... He pours the most viscous part onto the aluminum foil, making four separate little puddles.

He quickly dismantles a ballpoint pen, making a straw. He hands it to Caroline.

SETH

Inhale the smoke and hold it.

CAROLINE

What is this, like freebase?

SETH

Not like. It is.

He lights the flame under the aluminum foil. The puddle crackles and pops, then starts to smoke --

SETH

Go... Go!

There's a rush of thick grey smoke. Caroline catches most of it.

SETH

Hold it.

She pulls it in deeper and holds... Suddenly her expression changes... Her eyes lose their focus, her face slackens, an almost sexual response. Seth is watching her intensely.

SETH

See... Now, you see.

Caroline slumps back against the counter. Seth moves against her, kissing her, running his hands over her breasts and body. She stares over his shoulder, holding it as long as she can.

Finally she exhales --

CAROLINE

More.

The cloud of grey smoke from her lungs fills the room.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

The White House CHIEF OF STAFF meets with Robert Wakefield. The Chief of Staff has the floor; he always has the floor.

This is a man you do not want to disappoint.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Until you officially take over the office of National Drug Control Policy, under no circumstances should you speak to the press unprotected, without going through this office or having someone in the room. There are a lot of interests in this town and, right now, they're all scared

of you. The reason they're scared of you...technically, you have veto power over their budgets. So think about that: FBI, CIA, DEA, CUSTOMS, TREASURY, ATF, DEFENSE, IRS, Radio Shack and the DMV, they're all gonna want to speak to you. And that's the good news... You'll also be meeting Senators and Congressman, each with a specially prepared question. Their question is designed for one thing: to make them look smart. If you lecture them, they won't think you respect them. If you respond with utter humility, they will. Remember, this is about your respect for them, and the President's respect for them. Speaking of which, as soon as he gets back from Russia and China, we'll get you in there for some face-time, let the two of you catch up.

(beat)

It'd probably be a good idea for you to meet your predecessor. I'll have Jeff Sheridan take you over. Also, four weeks from today you will give your first official press conference. In it you will outline the President's strategy for winning the war on drugs.

(beat)

Okay, anything else?

ROBERT

I'll be sure to let you know.

INT. EXECUTIVE BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Robert makes his way through a warren of hallways in the endless corridors of the Old Executive Building alongside JEFF SHERIDAN, 35, an enthusiastic government employee who has found his place.

SHERIDAN

I just want to be clear about one thing. I used to work for him, but now I work for you. I'm not a partisan person, I'm an issue person. In the next few weeks, if you allow me, we'll get you well-versed on an

incredible array of issues. The most important of which, in my opinion, being Mexico. I know everybody that you're gonna meet. It's important that they like you. It's not important that they like me. That's why I can help protect you.

ROBERT

Like you protected Landry?

SHERIDAN

I see where you're going with that, but if I could just say something, which is basically that a guy like Landry is so autocratic he doesn't know how to let himself be helped; it's a point of pride to take every bullet, no matter who fired it, or whether it was even aimed at him, which personally I think it very self-defeating. Now, don't get me wrong, he's a man of enormous integrity, but there's a political component to this job that the General just didn't have any patience for.

INT. OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY - DAY

Robert and Sheridan enter the office of outgoing Drug Czar, GENERAL RALPH LANDRY, 60's, buzz-cut, professional soldier with a sense of humor.

Landry is putting some personal items in a box.

GENERAL LANDRY

Jeff, you want to excuse us for a minute?

Sheridan nods and leaves.

GENERAL LANDRY

(bemused, off

Sheridan's exit)

Functionaries. Nice people, the Schedule C's. About twelve graduate degrees apiece, but it seems sometimes all they do is start rumors.

Robert and Landry shake hands.

ROBERT

You've done a fine job here, Sir.
The Office of National Drug Control
Policy is in better shape than when
you found it.

Landry tries to determine whether Robert believes this. He
looks around the office as if the policy is hiding somewhere.

GENERAL LANDRY

I'm not sure I made the slightest
difference.

(wistful)

I tried... I really did.

ROBERT

There are a lot of encouraging
statistics. The work's just started,
but I intend to see it through.
You've got my word on that.

GENERAL LANDRY

You're here for two years, three
maximum. What'd they promise you?
Court appointment? What? District?
Appeals?

(checks Robert's
reaction)

Not Supreme... Supreme?

ROBERT

I've come in to do a tough job and
that's what I'm going to focus on.

General Landry SIGHS.

GENERAL LANDRY

When Krushchev was forced out, he sat
down and wrote two letters and handed
them to his successor. He said "When
you get into a situation you can't
get out of, open the first letter
and you'll be saved. And when you
get into another situation you can't
get out of, open the second." Soon
enough this guy found himself in a
tight place. So he opened the first
letter. It said, "Blame everything
on me." So he blamed the old guy
and it worked like a charm.

(beat)

He got into another situation he couldn't get out of, so he opened the second letter, which read, "Sit down and write two letters."

They stare at each other a beat. Then Landry smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANOLO'S STREET, MEXICO - DAY

A cinderblock house. Kids and dogs in the street. A face we recognize as Manolo's peers out of a curtain into the street.

INT. MANOLO'S KITCHEN - DAY

The ceiling is stained, the floor sags. A cheap radio plays. Manolo is at the door. Javi sits at a dinette table.

He talks to Manolo but watches Manolo's wife, ANNA, 20's, a nice-looking, ostensibly demure young woman, as she moves around the kitchen.

JAVIER

Relax. If they were going to kill us they would have done it in the desert.

MANOLO

They wouldn't do it in front of all these people. They'd send someone later, when we're alone.

Manolo tenses, and throws open the window.

MANOLO

(yelling out the window)
Away from the car. Now!

MANOLO'S POV out the window as KIDS play in the car, sitting behind the wheel.

JAVIER

Even if that were true, they're not going to come to your house where you're waiting for them.

ANNA

He's right. They'll do it when you're

walking somewhere, make it look like street crime.

MANOLO

Shut your fucking mouth. Nobody's talking to you.

Anna sets a cup of coffee in front of Javi and stares at him.

INT. POLICE SEDAN - DAY

Javi and Manolo cruise through the streets of Tijuana.

JAVIER

If you want her to stay out of it, then stop telling her everything. You should learn how to keep a secret.

MANOLO

She's nosy. She hears me on the telephone.

JAVIER

Anyway, I don't think we'll ever see them again. Everything's back to normal.

EXT. TIJUANA STREET - DAY

Tourist hell. A cacophony of street vendors, panhandlers, and vehicular traffic. Javier and Manolo are speaking with a flustered young American TOURIST COUPLE.

TOURIST WOMAN

You're a police officer. Aren't you going to take a report or something? Don't you want to know what kind of car it is?

TOURIST MAN

It's a Brown Ford Explorer --

TOURIST WOMAN

It was right here. It's been stolen. I want to file a report.

MANOLO

Please. Filing a report will not help you find your car.

JAVIER

The police won't find your car.

TOURIST WOMAN

But you're the police.

Javier pulls out a note pad and scribbles a number.

JAVIER

Call this man, he'll find your car
for you.

TOURIST MAN

I don't get it --

TOURIST WOMAN

How will this guy know who has our
car?

JAVIER

The police will tell him.

There's a beat of confusion.

TOURIST MAN

Why will they tell him but they won't
tell us?

TOURIST WOMAN

(getting it)

Because we pay him, stupid.

(to Javier)

Right? And he pays the police.

And then our car appears.

JAVIER

Yes. Better than filling out forms,
right?

The man reaches in his wallet and offers Javier a twenty.
Javi waves him off.

Javier and Manolo walk back to their squad car when two SUV's
come to a stop in front of them.

Javier and Manolo exchange a look. The doors SLAM and
FOOTSTEPS approach.

OFFICER (O.S.)

Javier Rodriguez.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA JOLLA GOLF AND TENNIS CLUB - DAY

A ladies luncheon in the Nancy Reagan Dining Room overlooking a putting green. The bejewelled WIVES of successful men yammer at one another around tables with rich flower centerpieces.

SUPERTITLE: LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA, JUST OUTSIDE SAN DIEGO

One wife, HELENA AYALA, 32, ex-model, with a sweetness and intelligence that almost contradicts her beauty, stares out the window at a small BOY, 5, using a putter as tall as he is. Helena is six months pregnant and radiant.

A waiter brings Helena's starter course. Her friends, NAN DOBBS, early 40's, post Junior League, a little tipsy,

STEWIE and ALEX, same League, watch her --

NAN

Duck salad?

HELENA

Mmm.

Nan can't believe it.

NAN

Helena, you never order duck salad.

HELENA

Well, that's true. I don't.

(re: her belly)

I think someone else is asking for it.

NAN

Well, he's got good taste. Isn't it the most wonderful thing you ever tasted? I mean ever.

HELENA

It's delicious --

STEWIE

They're the most marvelous little creatures. Canard. They fly, swim, walk. And so cute with their babies

marching along behind.

NAN

Looking for a nice sauce ala orange.

Everyone laughs. Helena is by far the youngest in her crowd.

ALEX

It's a very fatty bird. All that winter insulation. Just like me.

NAN

You mean all breast, just like you.

ALEX

You're bad --

NAN

(singsong)
Jealous, that's all --

HELENA

I've heard... I can't remember where... That it's full of that good kind of fat, the kind you're supposed to eat --

STEWIE

Unsaturated fat --

TWO WOMEN IN UNISON

Polyunsaturated.

HELENA

And now there's a good cholesterol and bad cholesterol. Everything they tell you completely changes every other week. I don't know why they think we should listen at all.

NAN

What I know is ducks, as cute as they are, were designed by God to be eaten.

Nan reaches for a taste and the other women lean forward also, a sea of inanity swirling around Helena's salad.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB PARKING LOT - DAY

Helena buckles her little boy, DAVID, 5, into the front seat

of her Mercedes. He won't let go of his putter.

HELENA

I'll put this in the back.

DAVID

No --

HELENA

All the professionals keep them in the trunk.

DAVID

Not Tiger Woods.

HELENA

Especially Tiger Woods.

(sharing a secret)

...Actually, he keeps his on the back seat.

She pulls the putter away from the reluctant boy and sets it on the back seat.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

A modern high-rise on the waterfront playground of San Diego.

Helena passes the hotel in her car.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

A standard room looking out at the water which is dotted with sailboats and cruise ships. The bed is covered with hi-tech surveillance equipment.

The equipment salesman, LONNIE, 40's, who makes a fetish of gadgetry, explains the finer points of operation to FRANCISCO "FRANKIE" FLORES, 30's, sallow, watery-eyed, in expensive clothes.

LONNIE

Gates, Myrhvold, Bezos. I sell to all those guys. Why? Because the technology to intrude has reached the masses. Your competitor, your ex-spouse, adversaries, stalkers, they're at the local electronics store right now, and they're gonna be intruding on you not only through your telephone, but your fax, cell

phone, pager, cable TV, Musak,
windows, walls, air conditioning
ventilation, modem, and internet
connection.

He walks over to the bed and the sexy equipment --

LONNIE

Nobody has these babies, no way, not
the shiznit.

Frederico picks up a piece of equipment.

FRANCISCO

I want to intercept cell phone calls,
digital and analog. And locate the
source of the call. I need databasing
capability, to cross-reference calls
and numbers.

Lonnie lovingly picks up a laptop computer with a sleek device
attached to it --

LONNIE

Your Cellular Secretary, friend across
all the digital wireless spread
spectrum.

(beat)

So, Francisco, what do you do? You
a PI? Private security?

Francisco looks at Lonnie coldly.

FRANCISCO

Assassin.

LONNIE

(not missing a beat)

Assassin, okay. Let's get you started
in surveillance.

EXT. GEORGETOWN BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

The house takes up most of one of the nicest blocks. PEOPLE
enter and party VOICES drift out.

SUPERTITLE: GEORGETOWN, WASHINGTON, D.C.

INT. GEORGETOWN BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

A power cocktail party in full swing. This is where most of

the business in Washington gets done.

Robert, scotch in hand, listens to a smug PHARMACEUTICAL LOBBYIST explain the world.

PHARMACEUTICAL LOBBYIST

We in the legal drug business, and I mean Merck, Pfizer, the rest of my very powerful clients, realize this isn't a war with a traditional winner and loser, but an organism at war with itself, whose weapons of mass destruction happen to be intoxicants. And if you want a body count look no further than alcohol which racks up 80,000 kills a year. Cocaine manages a measly 2,000. Same for Heroin. But, the big daddy is Big Tobacco which kills 380,000 each year, which, by the way, is more people than have been killed by all the illegal drugs in the last century.

ROBERT

(faking it)

That's very interesting.

The lobbyist smiles. Robert sips his drink.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON ROBERT

In another room. Listening to STAN, overweight advocate for the United States Council of Chambers of Commerce.

STAN

It's time, Robert, to choke some honesty out of these rural legislators; get'em to fess up that it's pretty much Prisons or Casinos in terms of their choices for economic growth.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON ROBERT

listening to ETHAN, earnest advocate of harm reduction.

ETHAN

What's the difference between Prozac and Ecstasy, you ask? One's a mattress and the other's a trampoline. Molecules don't have morality.

Really, think about it: some molecule changes the way a serotonin re-uptake inhibitor works, it's not suddenly a bad molecule; it's just a molecule. My theory: America has a real fear of short, intense experiences.

Robert turns away --

ROBERT

(under his breath)
Like you.

ANOTHER ROOM

Robert at the bar getting another scotch. A secretive man, TIM, 40's, nerdy, sidles up beside him and whispers furtively in his ear.

TIM

(whispering)
Chemicals? Some say problems, others say solution. Imagine a cloud that when it rains prohibits the growth of poppies or takes the THC out of marijuana. Imagine a pill that eliminates any psychological craving, from Dilaudid to Dove Bars. Law enforcement hasn't let science sit on the sidelines. Addiction is no more relevant than polio or the Black Plague.

Tim slips away into the crowd. Robert moves away from the bar.

ANOTHER ROOM

An argument is breaking out between an ECONOMIST and an UNDERSECRETARY OF DEFENSE with Robert as the audience.

ECONOMIST

(to the undersecretary)
You're not battling traffickers or dealers, but a market, and the market contains a paradox: if you arrest traffickers, you raise prices, and you also raise profits, which brings more traffickers into the business.

UNDERSECRETARY

(to the Economist)
Back in the real world, we're talking about Mexico and not John Maynard Keynes. We will spend 18 billion dollars this year on this "war," and the question on the table every year is do we certify Mexico as an ally or not?

Another man, RUSH PHILLIPS, a middle-aged powerbroker, overhears, then joins and Robert is encircled.

RUSH PHILLIPS

You want to make a difference, hit the users. You don't jeopardize our financial markets by some hypocritical stance on drug consumption. We're snorting it, why penalize Mexico for supplying it?

UNDERSECRETARY

Mexico, don't talk to me about Mexico --

ECONOMIST

It's the stick of law enforcement that creates the carrot of huge profits... That's economic truth --

RUSH PHILLIPS

Addicts don't vote; they don't have PACs; they don't spend soft money, that's political truth --

UNDERSECRETARY

We're locking them up and consumption is falling --

ECONOMIST

The price of coke and heroin has dropped and purity has increased. All this law enforcement has achieved is kids can get better stuff, cheaper. In economic terms, you can forget it; this is not a winnable war.

RUSH PHILLIPS

Christ, you want to decertify somebody, take Pakistan or Columbia. We don't need them for anything.

ECONOMIST

If you manage to seize an inconceivable 50 percent of all drugs coming into this country, you'll still raise the price of coke and heroin less than 3 percent which won't affect drug use at all.

RUSH PHILLIPS

Why are we calling this a war at all? You don't declare war on your own people. Addiction is a little worm that gnaws a house apart from the inside.

MICHAEL ADLER, about Robert's age, and as successful, but in a different way, approaches, catching Robert's eye through the arguing demagogues.

UNDERSECRETARY

We need Mexico for these reasons: number one -- Defense; two -- Trade; three -- Tourism; then, way on down the line, comes Drugs. The President knows this. Why's he holding everybody's feet to the fire?

MICHAEL

(solemn)

Mr. Wakefield, there's a situation that needs your attention right away.

Robert looks at Michael, squints, looks closer, then follows.

RUSH PHILLIPS

(oblivious)

One in sixteen Americans is of Mexican descent. Mexico our third largest trading partner...

ANGLE ON ROBERT AND MICHAEL ON THE BACK PORCH.

ROBERT

You're looking pretty good for an old guy.

MICHAEL

My work keeps me young.

ROBERT

Which part, getting terrorists loose

on bail or freeing convicted murderers
on technicalities?

MICHAEL

The worst serial killer in history -
who? Gacy - right? Killed forty
two people. Our government killed
fifty thousand in Vietnam and lied
about it every day.

ROBERT

Michael, you represent drug dealers,
not civil libertarians.

MICHAEL

We kidnapped Noriega out of Panama.
Is that covered in your Constitution?
Because it isn't in mine.

ROBERT

Noriega is a criminal.

MICHAEL

Noriega was head of a sovereign nation
who made the mistake of doing business
with the U.S. Government. So, no,
I don't have a problem waking up
every day and fighting our government,
fighting people like you, trying to
keep this system a little bit honest.

ROBERT

(amused)

Last I read your clients were chopping
people up with chainsaws and
delivering illegal narcotics into
this country.

MICHAEL

I hope when you were on the bench,
Judge Wakefield, you didn't handle
the presumption of innocence in the
same fashion.

ROBERT

If I ever return to the bench,
Counselor Adler, I hope I have the
pleasure of hearing your arguments.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM, SAN DIEGO - DAY

Eduardo Ruiz lies in a hospital bed, handcuffed to the railing. His bandaged foot is held aloft by a sling and a tube drains the wound. He is tugging on the handcuffs as Castro and Gordon enter the room.

GORDON

You planning on going somewhere, Eduardo? You don't like it here? This is the best situation you're going to have for a long, long time.

RUIZ

I am a legitimate business. Fishing boats. Tuna. Check it out. Tax records, everything --

GORDON

Listen you motherfucker, you tried to kill me with a fucking cannon.

RUIZ

You can't visit me here. I want my lawyer.

GORDON

The amount of coke we got on you means capital punishment in some states.

CASTRO

Move 'em to Texas, fry 'em up.

GORDON

We got you on tape making the deal. We got you bragging about the quality. We got you bragging about your business. We got you.

A NURSE appears in the doorway. Gordon goes to the door and shuts it in her face.

GORDON

One chance here, Eduardo. Make us believe you got a boss. No boss, it's all on you.

RUIZ

It's a death sentence. I'll never make it to the trial.

GORDON

We can protect you.

Ruiz looks at them in disbelief.

CASTRO

Who do you work for?

RUIZ

This is coercion.

GORDON

That's a big word for a fisherman.

CASTRO

Who do you work for?

Gordon and Ruiz stare at each other.

RUIZ

I know another word... Immunity.

CUT TO:

EXT. AYALA HOME - LA JOLLA - DAY

A starter castle high in the hills near Mount Soledad, an exclusive neighborhood with views of the ocean. Joggers jog to the SOUNDS of tennis and Jacuzzis gurgling, and lawn care equipment operated by Mexicans.

Behind the Ayala gate we see David playing with his golf club on the lush lawn.

Workers set-up the party under the direction of a professional party planner.

A BMW 740il with tinted windows pulls into the driveway.

DAVID

Daddy!

The window lowers and we see CARL AYALA, 40's, handsome, charismatic, second generation American, in expensive, conservative clothes, covering his cell phone as he greets his kids.

CARL

Hello. Hello.

He goes back to his phone call, pulling around to the garage.
David goes back to his game.

INT. AYALA DINING ROOM - DAY

There are MAIDS in the house and a COOK in the kitchen. The large rooms are filled with fine art.

Helena Ayala sits at the dining room table with plans, bills and receipts spread before her. Carl enters and paces around the room, continuing his cell phone conversation.

CARL

(into phone)

I'm sorry, Jonas. I don't care if that is the price you have gotten in order countries.

Helena watches her husband pace as he talks. He can't help it, but a portion of this call is theatrical, for an audience's benefit, which in this instance happens to be his wife. Helena's expression of annoyance resets itself into love.

CARL

This is America, a different country. I am Carl, a different man. So you see, everything about our situation is different and I believe the pricing will be different, too.

(beat, listens)

You're a reasonable man... So take the weekend to think about it.

Carl clicks off the phone, turns to Helena.

CARL

Every day with this guy is like starting all over again.

Carl winds down and finally becomes present in the room with his wife. He looks at her. She looks back.

CARL

Hi.

HELENA

Hi.

CARL

What's up?

HELENA

Just watching you.

CARL

I got that. How was your day?

She pushes the topiary away from her. Suddenly, she seems tired. Carl comes over and puts his hand on her pregnant belly.

CARL

You all right?

HELENA

I keep feeling like I'm forgetting something.

Her husband watches her, then wraps his arms around her.

EXT. AYALA HOME - DAY

Carl and Helena step out on the front porch of their home and watch David play with his golf putter.

OUTSIDE THEIR GATE

An unmarked police car rolls up and stops behind the wall. Another arrives and another and another. OFFICERS in DEA jackets exit the cars.

There is MURMURING, then SILENCE.

Helena slowly turns to look at her husband. He doesn't look at her.

HELENA

David, come inside --

Suddenly, POLICE and DEA enter the front yard. Gordon and Castro enter the yard and move quickly up the drive to Carl.

CARL

What is this? What is going on?

GORDON

Mr. Ayala?

CARL

That's right.

GORDON

You're under arrest for violation of
Federal Narcotics laws.

Gordon and Castro spin him, cuff him, and without emotion begin pulling him from his yard. David is trying to get to his father. In a kind of shock. Helena trails after him.

Castro drags Carl into the street toward the open door of the cruiser. He pushes him down into the backseat.

GORDON

We have a warrant to search your
home, Mrs. Ayala.

Gordon hits the side of the cruiser and it pulls away. Carl looks at his wife through the window.

Gordon and Castro head up the driveway toward her house.

Helena is left standing in the street. NEIGHBORS, who have appeared in front yards and at the ends of driveways, stare at her with suspicion. David approaches and holds onto her leg.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. SALAZAR'S HEADQUARTERS - ANTEROOM - DAY

Javi and Manolo wait in Salazar's anteroom. A ceiling fan swirls the air. After a moment the door opens and an AIDE motions to them. They stand.

AIDE

(to Manolo)

Not you. You.

Javi goes into the room.

INT. SALAZAR'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is Spartan and military. Salazar and Javi sit facing each other. Salazar looks at a piece of paper.

SALAZAR

Javier Rodriguez. Twenty-nine years-
old. Graduated from Montessori
school. Five years as a beat cop in
TJ. Three years with the State

Police. Parents died four years ago in their apartment from carbon monoxide poisoning because they could not afford to fix their gas heater. Your sister works in a Maquiladora in Juarez, making designer blue-jeans. On the police force three years, you currently make 316 dollars a month.

Salazar crumples the piece of paper and tosses it in the trash.

SALAZAR

That's your past. I want to talk about your future. Would you be willing to do something for me?

JAVIER

If I can.

SALAZAR

I'm trying to bust the Tijuana Cartel.

JAVIER

What is it you want me to do?

SALAZAR

A small thing. Nothing really.

Javier thinks about this.

JAVIER

Does this offer include my partner?

SALAZAR

Only if he can be trusted.

JAVIER

He'll do what I say.

Salazar slides a folder across the desk. Javier opens it and sees a black and white surveillance photo of the informant.

SALAZAR

His name is Francisco Flores. He is a killer and gun smuggler for the Tijuana cartel. I need to speak with him. I need you to find him and bring him to me so that I can speak with him.

INT. POLICE SEDAN - DAY

Manolo faces Javier.

MANOLO

This is fucking crazy. Instead of killing us, he sends us on a suicide mission. Do you know who Frankie Flowers is? He's a psycho-cokehead-hitman. A faggot. He's killed fucking who knows how many people. You'd need half the force to get close to him. And you can't get their help because he lives in fucking San Diego.

JAVIER

Then I guess I'm going by myself.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Robert Wakefield sits in business class. He twists the cap off a mini-bottle of bourbon and pours it over a cup of ice. He empties a second bottle into the cup, then swirls it around on the ice. He takes a sip.

INT. AIRPORT GATE - DAY

Robert exits with his briefcase and hanging bag, two SECURITY MEN trailing him. He sees Barbara and Caroline, his wife and daughter, waiting by the their station wagon. They wave.

INT. CAR - DAY

On the way home from the airport. Caroline drives carefully with Barbara in the front seat and Robert in back.

ROBERT

What's it like?

(thinks)

Imagine you're being accosted by a swarm of beggars in the heart of Calcutta, except the beggars are wearing \$1500 suits and they don't say "please" or "thank you."

CAROLINE

What about legalizing everything?

Has anybody talked about that?

ROBERT

Fine -- legalization. Okay, forgetting all of our international trade agreements, legalize everything today. The Government inserts itself into all drug transactions. The U.S. becomes a giant pharmacy. Our borders are mobbed, lines of people from here to Europe wanting to smoke, snort and shoot themselves into oblivion.

BARBARA

(lightly)

Like a Grateful Dead Concert.

ROBERT

Drugs begin pouring out of America into every other country in the world. Canada is completely overwhelmed.

CAROLINE

What if every country legalized at the same time?

ROBERT

(smiles)

Somehow, I don't see that happening.

INT. WAKEFIELD DINING ROOM - EVENING

From the hallway we see Robert and Barbara and Caroline having dinner. A family tableau. We hear Barbara talking, the murmur of the days events.

In the room, Barbara continues her dinner table thoughts.

Robert has a good deal of reading material stacked on the table.

BARBARA

So you know we put the case before the arbitration panel, none of whom had any expertise. Superfund is just one of those words. People stop paying attention.

ROBERT

That's frustrating.

BARBARA

It's so frustrating.

There is wine on the table and Caroline is allowed a glass.

Her parents watch her take a responsible sip.

CAROLINE

(to Robert)

Did you meet the President?

BARBARA

Honey, your father knows the President.

ROBERT

As it happens, the President of the United States, my new boss, the leader of the free world, has me penciled in for some "face time".

CAROLINE

Will we get invited to the White House?

ROBERT

I don't know.

CAROLINE

How long's the job?

ROBERT

It's a presidential appointment so... until I quit or get fired.

BARBARA

Czar for life, just like a real czar.

CAROLINE

That makes mom the Czarina. I'm a Czarette. Like Anastasia.

Caroline thinks about this.

CAROLINE

None of my friends can fucking believe my dad is the actual Drug Czar.

BARBARA

Caroline --

CAROLINE

Sorry, but I mean, come on.

Robert doesn't know if she's putting him down.

CAROLINE

It's great, daddy. It's just amazing,
that's all.

They all look at each other. Caroline sips her wine.

CUT TO:

INT. SAN DIEGO JAIL - DAY

In the intake area of a busy San Diego precinct, Helena sits on a bench and regroups. Detectives move past her. Handcuffed criminals are separated, bagged and tagged.

beautifully dressed man, ARNIE METZGER, 30's, super-lawyer, knows everyone from the top of the system to the bottom, slick but likable, smart and ruthless, too, separates himself from a DETECTIVE he's gladhanding and approaches Helena.

ARNIE

Helena, I'm so sorry --

HELENA

Arnie, thank God.

Metzger sits, giving her a hug.

HELENA

Can you please tell me what on earth
is going on?

Arnie looks at her as if to say, "do you really not know?"

Then, he speaks quietly with his hand in front of his mouth.

ARNIE

I understand. You're upset. You
want to know what's going on. That's
good.

HELENA

Why are you talking like that?

ARNIE

Listen to me carefully. First of

all, Carl isn't here. DEA's got him and they'll hang on to him until arraignment, which will probably be tomorrow. So here you're wasting your time. Are you with me?

He checks to see if this is registering.

ARNIE

Good. From now on I want you to expect that every word you utter will be tape-recorded, that the movement of your lips is being read. Got it?

HELENA

Arnie, this is crazy.

He makes eye contact with her.

ARNIE

Got it?

(she slowly nods)

Good. Do not discuss anything over the telephone. Do not talk to the neighbors. Stay out of your yard.

HELENA

What is he being charged with?

ARNIE

I don't know, but under no circumstances would I talk about it here. I want you to go home and relax the best you can. Continue your life as if nothing has happened. That is very important.

HELENA

Arnie, I feel like Alice stepping through the looking glass.

ARNIE

That's a very apt analogy, Helena. Now, go home and be with your children.

EXT. BUILDING PARKING LOT - DAY

Helena exits. Her expression is set as she drives. She turns a corner in the shopping district, passing JAVIER AND

MANOLO who are walking down the street. Tourists, drunk Marines and the homeless piss away another day.

We follow them into a bar with blackened windows and a discrete sign.

INT. BAR - DAY

This is a place where men come to meet men. And it's already lively even at this early hour. Javier and Manolo find a seat and wait.

LATER

Javi is working on his second beer when he seems to recognize somebody.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Francisco "Frankie" Flowers has entered the bar. Javi watches him circulate through the room then settle at the bar. Javier finishes his beer, rises, and takes the empty seat next to Francisco. Manolo watches.

Very quickly Javi strikes up a conversation. We don't hear what they're saying but it doesn't matter because Francisco clearly likes Javi.

Off Francisco's anticipatory smile --

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. MILITARY BASE - MEXICO - DAY

The back of a blue van opens and a blindfolded Francisco falls onto the ground.

Surrounding him are Javi and Salazar, who watch as two of Salazar's MEN drag Francisco away toward an abandoned mission-style building.

SALAZAR

(clearly pleased with Javi)
I'm curious how you did this with such economy.

JAVIER

Everybody has a weakness.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMEBODY'S PARENTS' MANSION, CINCINNATI - NIGHT

With its old-growth trees and manipulated shrubbery, the large house is shrouded in the mystery of well-heeled suburbia. It is very late.

INT. SOMEBODY'S PARENTS' MANSION - NIGHT

Somebody's parents are out of town and the house feels empty. Big empty rooms with expensive furniture nobody sits on.

Faint MUSIC echoes through the house.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

High ceilings of a 1930's kitchen. Vodka bottles and cranberry juice and limes are spilled across a counter. ON THE RHODES AGAIN by Morcheeba plays from a jam-box on a counter.

Maybe ten TEENAGERS are partying hard in this kitchen. It's weird and disassociated, people wandering in and out, playing with kitchen utensils, heavily fucked up.

There are drugs on a mirror on the eat-in table. Caroline and Seth and two friends sit around this table. VANESSA, 16, almost pretty, is hitting a freebase pipe and holds the hit. FUCKED-UP BOWMAN, 17, super-preppy with a wan, Baby Huey face, takes a slug of vodka.

They are jittery, sweaty, tweaked, fucked-up --

CAROLINE

All I'm saying, what I'm saying, is it never seems like anybody ever says anything that matters to them, like we all look at each other and nod with responses we've been trained to make, not real responses, just social conventions, phony, fake smiles, surface bullshit... I mean, we're all smart and do we have any idea what each other are like, really like? Do I know what Seth's afraid of, or Vanessa, or fucked-up Bowman?

Everyone looks at Fucked-up Bowman who grinds his jaw appreciatively --

CAROLINE

...Probably, but do I ever say this stuff, just say, "hey, I'm uncomfortable in this crowd, I don't know what the fuck I'm doing, either? I know you're afraid and it's okay--"

Seth's words come quickly, they're riffing, totally in sync, totally wired --

SETH

We act like we have all the answers and we're totally invincible like our parents seem and their parents before them and it's fucking bullshit --

Fucked-up Bowman takes another slug of vodka and almost pukes.

FUCKED-UP BOWMAN

For instance --

SETH

For instance I know you jack-off thinking about Caroline even though you're supposedly "in love" with Vanessa. Whatever the fuck that means?

(a digression)

I mean, what is that convention, anyway? We're all these random collections of self-interest, and then we just decide that now we're two people walking along --

Caroline expels a hit of rock cocaine --

CAROLINE

And Vanessa doesn't think she's pretty so she does all these weird fucking diets which is totally about self-esteem. And she's beautiful.

(beat)

And that's not even fair. Because listen to me. I'm fucking lying right now. This is exactly what I'm talking about... I'm supposedly talking about you, making some big point about you, and it's really about me. So I should talk about me, not you, not even the universal

"you..."

(takes a beat)

Okay. Okay, I'm worried I'm not really smart or that I'm not nearly as smart as people think I am, or that my parents' expectations have been way too high since I was five, I mean who knows they're going to Harvard when they're five, not that I'm blaming them for anything because everything's great, and I may not even get in, but we all feel this shit and we never acknowledge it and if we can't acknowledge it to the people we care the most about then who will we ever say it too and what kind of life will that be?

They all look at each other with love. This is an adventure and they're having a connection --

FUCKED-UP BOWMAN

I jack-off thinking about Seth.
Everybody I know does.

Bowman does another huge hit of freebase.

CAROLINE

(disgusted)

Ach, that's what I'm talking about.
Sarcasm. Always fucking sarcasm.
You're afraid and you think if you admit it people will think you're weak or won't like you --

SETH

We live our lives by these unspoken rules that are handed to us.

They all look at each other, vibrating with the moment --

VANESSA

Let's be different --

FUCKED-UP BOWMAN

I can't feel my hands.

Bowman looks around, squinting, confused. He's chalk white.

FUCKED-UP BOWMAN

I'm serious --

Suddenly, he clutches his chest and begins to twitch. Puke and foam come from his mouth. He seizes and falls from the chair. Vanessa SCREAMS.

Seth and Caroline push the table aside to get a better look. Other people in the kitchen slowly take notice.

VANESSA

He's blue. He isn't breathing --

CAROLINE

Is he breathing?

Bowman's eyes have rolled back in his head.

SETH

What do we do? Okay. Fucked-up Bowman's turning blue. Doctor. We need a doctor.

VANESSA

Your dad's a doctor. Call him --

SETH

He's a research doctor. You're dad's a doctor, too --

VANESSA

What kind of research?

SETH

Mapping the fucking pig genome. We'll call your dad, he's a neurosurgeon --

VANESSA

It's three a.m. I'm not supposed to be here. I snuck out --

CAROLINE

Are you kidding... I'm staying with you --

SETH

He's gonna fucking die right here on the kitchen floor --

ANOTHER KID

He can't. My parents are in Barbados --

OMITTED

EXT. SUBURBAN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The Taurus wagon races up to the emergency room of Suburban Hospital. The back door opens and Bowman tumbles out onto the wheelchair ramp under the fluorescent lights.

The car screeches around the circle --

ACROSS THE PARKING LOT

TWO OFFICERS in a police car see the body tumble out of the car.

The cop car wheels around and cuts off the egress of the Taurus wagon --

INT. FORD TAURUS WAGON - NIGHT

Seth is behind the wheel. Caroline and Vanessa are in the back. They stare out at the cops getting out of the cruiser.

SETH

Nobody has anything on them, right?

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. TORTURE ROOM - BARRACKS - DAY

Francisco is strapped naked into a chair. Duct tape covers his mouth. His face is bruised and swollen. A cruel TORTURER talks to him calmly while dumping chili powder into a container of soda water.

TORTURER

We know Tijuana Cartel gunmen killed our chief of intelligence, Francisco. We know you killed police commanders in Tijuana and Mexico City. Why do you resist?

He approaches Francisco and begins shaking up the soda water. He rips the tape off his mouth.

FRANCISCO

My father is rich. He'll pay you.

TORTURER

Not the correct answer, my friend.

The torturer puts another strip of duct tape across Francisco's mouth.

TORTURER

We know that you went after the neighbor of General Salazar, a simple alfalfa farmer. His grand-daughter was shot. This is stupid behavior, Francisco.

Francisco starts to squirm and whimper. The torturer closes one of Francisco's nostrils and sprays the pepper-laced water into the other nostril.

It's like a bomb went off in Francisco's brain. He SCREAMS and passes out. Blood and mucous oozes out of his nose.

INT. BARRACKS - MEXICAN MILITARY BASE - DAY

Javier stands guard outside a door, listening to the strangulated SCREAMS of Francisco. He's sickened.

ACROSS THE COURTYARD

Manolo ignores Francisco's CRIES, while shooting the shit with several of Salazar's MEN, who laugh appreciatively at something he's said.

CUT TO:

EXT. AYALA HOME, SAN DIEGO - NIGHT

Valet parkers in uniform work the driveway. The party is ablaze and there are lights in the trees. A Lester Lanin-like band plays a STANDARD that drifts across the grounds.

EXT. AYALA HOME - NIGHT

A conservative monied crowd mingles. Helena is talking with a GROUP of rich people who include her friends, Nan, Stewie and Alex, from the country-club, and their HUSBANDS.

STEWIE

This is fabulous, Helena. What a turnout.

HELENA

Thank you so much, but I had a lot

of help.

Helena circles away. As Helena leaves, the women speak their minds --

NAN

It's a turnout because it's a spectacle. Can you imagine?

ALEX

I've met her husband, as nice as they come.

STEWIE

It teaches me a valuable lesson...
(re: the nice house)
Apparently crime pays.

NAN

Silly, you knew that already.

ON THE STAGE

The band stops playing and steps aside as a man in a tuxedo takes the microphone. Behind the band is a huge "A.L.A. - Adult Literacy Advocates" Banner.

TUXEDO

Hello. Thank you. Thank you all. I have the results of the silent auction...

CUT TO:

INT. JUVENILE DETENTION, CINCINNATI - HOLDING CELL - MORNING

Caroline Wakefield lies on a bench in a grey-walled holding cell. She wears paper slippers and her belt has been removed. Even youth can't disguise her hangover.

INT. SOCIAL WORKER OFFICE - MORNING

Caroline is perched on the edge of her chair. Across the desk from her is a tired SOCIAL WORKER, 40's, who has been assigned Caroline's case and is giving her the "exit" interview.

SOCIAL WORKER

...How old are you?

CAROLINE

Sixteen

SOCIAL WORKER

Live with your parents?

CAROLINE

Yes.

SOCIAL WORKER

Parents still together?

CAROLINE

Yes.

SOCIAL WORKER

Do you work?

CAROLINE

I volunteer. I read to blind people.
One day a week for two hours.

SOCIAL WORKER

In school?

CAROLINE

Cincinnati Country Day.

The Social worker looks up from her questionnaire and sees
Caroline for the first time.

SOCIAL WORKER

Private?

CAROLINE

Yeah.

SOCIAL WORKER

How are your grades?

CAROLINE

I'm third in my class.

SOCIAL WORKER

What's that mean?

CAROLINE

I get A's. All A's.

SOCIAL WORKER

You do? What else you do?

CAROLINE

(her college resume)

I'm a National Merit Finalist. I'm on the Hi-Q team and the Math team. I'm in the Spanish Club. I'm a Thespian. I'm Vice-President of my class. I'm on the volleyball team.

The social worker pushes the forms she's filling out away and looks again at Caroline --

SOCIAL WORKER

You wanna tell me what you're doing here, Caroline?

INT. JUVENILE DETENTION - MORNING

A cold institutional lobby with hard plastic chairs and bad lighting. Government workers move behind thick glass windows with tiny mesh screens cut into them for talking.

Barbara Wakefield sits on one of the uncomfortable chairs. She's alone and has been crying. There's the sound of heavily locked doors OPENING and Caroline appears.

Barbara stands and wraps Caroline in her arms.

BARBARA

Oh, honey. Are you all right?

Caroline begins to cry into her mother's chest.

EXT. JUVI JAIL - MORNING

It's an early morning as Barbara Wakefield escorts her daughter from the bland government building.

CAROLINE

Did you tell Dad?

BARBARA

Not yet.

CAROLINE

Are you going to?

BARBARA

I don't know.

CAROLINE

Is this bad for him?

BARBARA

What do you think?

The streets are deserted. Their Saab wagon sits forlornly under grey skies in an uncovered public parking lot.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Helena slips into David's room and quietly watches him sleep.

INT. STUDY - LATER

Still wearing her evening gown, Helena collapses into a chair, exhausted. A TAP at the door startles her.

It's Arnie Metzger, who goes to the bar and pours himself a strong one. They sit opposite each other and neither speaks for a while.

HELENA

(quietly)

I am on the board of my son's school. I had a fundraiser for A.L.V. in my front yard. I have a right to know if my husband is a legitimate businessman.

ARNIE

Of course he is. I've known him for twenty years and he doesn't jaywalk...

Helena is relieved, but she's not looking at Arnie and when she does she sees him shaking his head in a very definitive, "No."

Arnie stands and continues talking as he walks to the windows and shuts the blinds one by one.

ARNIE

...Carl is a very important member of this community and when we're through suing the police and the district attorney and the DEA, they'll have to rename the public parks for your husband.

The blinds are closed. Arnie crosses to Helena and talks very softly in her ear. She's a beautiful woman and Arnie

manages to make this act seem both practical and inappropriate.

ARNIE

(whispering)

Your husband is very good at his job...

Helena leans back and looks at Arnie. He whispers more --

ARNIE

Which is smuggling illegal drugs into this country.

EXT. AYALA HOME - NIGHT

Workers break down the party under the watchful eye of the party planner. The neighborhood is quiet. There is a telephone repair van parked up the street.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Castro and Gordon have visual and audio equipment trained on the Ayala home. They both wear headsets.

GORDON'S POV: the blinds covering Helena's study glowing peacefully.

CASTRO

They're whispering. I can't hear them, but I know it. I smell conspiracy. I feel the lie vibrating out of the home.

GORDON

She ain't in on it.

CASTRO

I have dreams about this, actual dreams about busting the top people, the rich people, the white people.

GORDON

I'm telling you, she doesn't know shit.

CASTRO

She knows Arnie Metzger.

GORDON

So does half of San Diego.

CASTRO

You want to make a wager on this?

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

The music is still playing. Helena looks numb. She motions Arnie to her. He leans in.

HELENA

If all our assets are frozen and our "sales force" has scattered... How am I supposed to survive? I'm giving birth in three months. How do I get through this?

ARNIE

You're gonna get through it, but the first thing we do is get Michael Adler to represent Carl. We get Adler and we beat this thing.

HELENA

How much do I pay him?

ARNIE

I suspect he'll accept his payment in publicity.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAKEFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

A large, well-maintained Colonial on Mockingbird Valley Road, an upper-middle class neighborhood in the wealthy East End of Cincinnati. Leaves fall on the Saab wagon in the driveway.

INT. ROBERT'S STUDY - NIGHT

Robert is looking at Caroline and he's not happy. Barbara is there, at a neutral distance from both of them.

ROBERT

Caroline? How well did you know this boy who overdosed?

She looks up beseechingly.

CAROLINE

He didn't hang around us. He's like one of those hippie kids. I'm not

part of that group. It was a party in all these rooms. His girlfriend who I barely know was completely hysterical... He's blue, he's puking... We didn't want to get in trouble, but what were we supposed to do?

(beat)

I mean, what would you have done if you had been us?

BARBARA

How well do you know this boy, Seth, who was driving? You know the police have charged him with a DUI and possession of marijuana.

CAROLINE

He's a friend. He's also like the only one who was dealing with the situation. He'd definitely had a few beers, but it's not like he wanted to drive. We didn't know what else to do.

(beat)

It wasn't my pot.

She searches her parents' faces. It has been a convincing performance and she expects victory.

ROBERT

Okay, honey. We understand. You're mother and I have to talk.

Caroline is confused by this reaction.

BARBARA

Honey, we'd like to talk alone.

Caroline stands abruptly --

CAROLINE

Like always.

Caroline leaves the study and shuts the door harder than necessary.

Robert and Barbara look at each other, raising their eyebrows and breathing deeply --

ROBERT

I think she's lying.

BARBARA

Me, too.

ROBERT

(reaching a decision)

We'll ground her, clip her wings a bit. School and scheduled activities and that's it until further notice. This has to be handled delicately. Dan Kelly, in the District Attorney's office, will probably help us out, quietly. Christ, this could be embarrassing.

BARBARA

Honey, this is difficult, but we've all had our moments. I tried --

ROBERT

Stop. You experimented in college. I don't want to hear about that.

BARBARA

Should we take the quotes off experiment and call it what it is?

ROBERT

This is different.

BARBARA

Why?

ROBERT

To begin with, she's only sixteen years-old.

BARBARA

I think she has to find out for herself, on her own. We have to allow her space --

ROBERT

Space for what? To O.D. like that other kid? I will not send the message that this type of behavior is okay with her parents. Because it isn't. Correct?

BARBARA

We don't want to push her away.
These are growing experiences.

Robert looks at his wife, then it dawns on him.

ROBERT

How long have you known about this?

No response.

ROBERT

(yelling)

How long have you known?

BARBARA

Six months. I found some marijuana,
that's all. And a little pipe about
two inches long. I talked with her.
She said her friends smoked pot and
drank --

ROBERT

Explain to me how you could think
that I shouldn't know about this.
Explain to me how this wouldn't be
relevant to me. As a parent.

BARBARA

She asked me not to.

He leaves the room.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Robert is in the hallway, at Caroline's door. He opens it
and we get BLASTED WITH MUSIC.

Caroline is sitting in a rocking chair with headphones on.
She faces the window and moves back and forth, back and forth.

Robert calls her name, but the SOUNDTRACK is drowning him
out.

He calls again, this time apparently loud enough for her to
hear. She takes the headphones off - the MUSIC stops - and
turns to look at him. Or rather, she looks right through
him, as though he didn't exist. Robert is so taken aback by
the coldness of her gaze that he doesn't speak.

She turns away from him and puts the headphones back on.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILITARY BASE - MEXICO - DAY

Javier and Salazar walk across the base. Salazar is feeling ebullient and it shows.

SALAZAR

You watch and learn. I earn his trust. Then more pain. Then I appear with kindness. Within a week he will follow me around like a dog.

JAVIER

But will he be house-trained?

SALAZAR

When he loves me like a father, he will never tell anyone he was here. He will freely give the names of his superiors. Then we get them and they too will give us names. And eventually somebody will get us to Juan Obregon and the cartel will fall.

They enter the barracks.

INT. CELL - MEXICAN MILITARY BASE - DAY

It's pitch black in the cell. There's a human in here, but we can't see him.

Suddenly the door is thrown open and light floods in, illuminating a very broken Francisco Flores.

The figure of Commander Salazar fills the doorway.

SALAZAR

This is shameful. A disgrace.
Francisco Flores --

Francisco cowers in the corners --

SALAZAR

It's all right, son. It's all right.
Salazar is here. You're among gentlemen, now. This shameful treatment will stop immediately.
(calling out)
Guard!

A GUARD appears in the doorway. Francisco is spooked.

SALAZAR

I want to know who is responsible for this treatment.

GUARD

Yes, sir!

SALAZAR

We aren't barbarians.

GUARD

Yes, sir!

SALAZAR

Bring this man a change of good clothes. Has he eaten?

GUARD

I don't know, sir.

SALAZAR

(to Francisco)

You will dine with me from now on.

Francisco moves closer to Salazar already feeling safe in his presence.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE, SAN DIEGO - DAY

A packed courthouse. Carl is at the defense table. He doesn't look at Helena who sits in the gallery next to Arnie Metzger.

The PROSECUTOR is finishing his argument --

PROSECUTOR

This is a man who heads a large criminal organization with international contacts we can only begin to understand. Our case against him is very strong. He is not a flight risk. His flight is assured. The people ask that your honor denies bail.

The prosecutor sits. Carl's defense lawyer, MICHAEL ADLER,

from the Georgetown party, stands and speaks.

ADLER

My client is no more a flight risk than your Honor or the able prosecutor. He is a pillar of his community, a family man with a wife and child in La Jolla, the community where he has made his home for over twenty years. As our defense will quickly show, my client is guilty of nothing more than being a handy target for an admitted criminal. Therefore we ask that you release Carl Ayala on his own recognizance.

Adler sits. The JUDGE makes a quick decision.

JUDGE

I'm gonna deny bail.

The judge SLAMS his gavel. The crowd is on its feet. Carl tries to get a glimpse of Helena. They make eye contact. Reporters from the press gallery are yelling for Helena.

Arnie ushers her away.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Adler, Arnie, and Helena push through a crowd toward her car.

There are several reporters there who ask questions --

REPORTER

Mrs. Ayala, were you aware your husband is the largest cocaine smuggler in America?

ADLER

Alleged, people, alleged.

Helena gets into her car and slams the door. Adler faces the reporters.

REPORTER #2

Mrs. Ayala is it true your husband has ordered a hit on Eduardo Ruiz?

Adler is in a role he relishes. Helena drives away. We move up to Gordon, who is watching from the hotel window

across the street. He speaks into a walkie-talkie, and a car down below pulls out to follow Helena.

ADLER

Carl Ayala sits on the board of the Children's Hospital. He is heavily involved with Adult Literacy. He has a small boy and another child on the way. If you spread this kind of innuendo, you can expect legal recourse. Are we clear on this point?

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

The marble government corridors are empty. No one is in yet.

One office has lights on.

INT. A.D.A. KELLY'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Robert Wakefield talks with an Assistant District Attorney, DAN KELLY, 40's.

ROBERT

I appreciate you coming in so early.

A.D.A. KELLY

Judge Wakefield, it's an honor to handle it for you. Consider it gone away. She's a minor; it probably would've expunged on her 18th birthday anyway.

ROBERT

Still, this was a sensitive issue for me and I wanted to thank you personally.

A.D.A. KELLY

Like I said, open container, P.I., Misdemeanor possession. Easy to make it disappear. For you, poof, it's gone.

A.D.A. Kelly thinks a moment, then tries for tact.

A.D.A. KELLY

One thing bothers me... That kid

they dropped off had coke and heroin in him. Serious amounts. He's lucky he lived. So I gotta ask: what's your daughter on?

ROBERT

I don't know what you mean.

A.D.A. KELLY

I mean, did you ask her? What kind of drugs has she tried?

Robert is silent for a beat.

ROBERT

I... I don't really know.

A.D.A. KELLY

Is she in any kind of therapy... professional help?

ROBERT

No, of course not. She's one of the top students at her school.

A.D.A. KELLY

Well, I hope it stays that way.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - EARLY MORNING

Robert in his car, thinking. The streets are empty. He picks up the cell phone.

ROBERT

(into phone)

It's Robert. Wipe your schedule clean for the next three days. I'm tired of talking to experts who never set foot outside the beltway. It's time to see the front lines.

INT. CAROLINE WAKEFIELD'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Caroline sits on the toilet in her private bathroom. She's not going to the bathroom, it's a seat and she's wearing her pajamas. She's reading a magazine. The exhaust fan is on.

There are pictures of her and her friends on the walls: goofy pictures from camp, from school, a collage she's made with cutouts from magazine pictures and copy.

On the sink next to her is a little square of well-charred aluminum foil; she's done many hits. She leans over and picks up a small piece of crack cocaine from a small pile in her soap dish. She drops it on a clean place on the foil. She picks up a lighter and the tube of a ball point pen she's turned into a straw.

She heats the bottom of the foil. The crack "crackles."

She chases the smoke across the foil. A huge hit. She leans her head back, her eyes roll back, she tries to focus on the magazine, on anything, she stares up at the ceiling.

She holds it as long as she can then blows it toward the exhaust fan.

Caroline looks at her watch. It's 7:20. She stands suddenly, unsteadily. She looks at herself in the mirror.

She's really high and indecisive. She looks around wildly.

She sees the shower. She turns it on. She drops her pajamas.

She goes back to the foil and hits another piece of the rock, taking another really big hit. She crushes the foil and flushes it down the toilet. She hops in the shower.

IN THE SHOWER

The water streams over her face. After a long beat she finally exhales the smoke of the hit through the water and steam. She's in ecstasy.

It's almost time to leave for school.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA JOLLA PLAYGROUND - DAY

Helena reads a book, Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert, and keeps an eye on David, who is playing on the monkey bars.

ACROSS THE ROAD at a careful distance is the ubiquitous telephone repair van. On the roof a parabolic mike swivels around.

INT. TELEPHONE REPAIR VAN - DAY

Castro and Gordon watch Helena via a small surveillance monitor.

GORDON

You should see little Montel play.
Little Montel is the next Maradona.

CASTRO

Maradona is a cokehead. Hand of
God, my ass. We're wasting our time
here.

GORDON

He won. He was a winner. That
bothers you.

CASTRO

Winners don't do coke. Or haven't
you been reading the bumper stickers?

Gordon looks at the monitor --

GORDON

What do we have here?

ON THE MONITOR:

David kicking a soccer ball with an
older strange man, TIGRILLO, Latino,
40's, fit and tough looking.

The man is very good. He juggles the ball and bounces it
off his head and David follows him away from the center of
the playground.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS

Helena notices David moving away while playing with the man.
She follows, then begins to jog after them.

HELENA

David, come back here this minute.
David!

As she closes distance the man stops juggling the ball and
abruptly picks up David and begins swinging him around by
his arms. David is having fun as Helena approaches.

HELENA

David --

DAVID

We're playing!

The strange man swings David up so that he's under his arm.

STRANGE MAN

Yeah, this is fun.

HELENA

Please put down my son.

The man holds David.

STRANGE MAN

Shouldn't let your kid wander off
with strangers.

HELENA

Thank you. That's a valuable lesson.
David, come on.

The strange man holds David tighter so that he's no longer
having fun. He begins to wriggle --

STRANGE MAN

Mrs. Ayala --

This gets her attention --

STRANGE MAN

Your husband owes a lot of money.
Enough that snapping this kid's neck
wouldn't nearly cover it.

David begins to cry. Helena looks around wildly for help.

STRANGE MAN

You better come up with it in a hurry
or your kid is going to disappear,
and he won't turn up until the evening
news.

He drops David who runs to his mother.

STRANGE MAN

You get exactly one warning.

The strange man moves away across the field.

STRANGE MAN

The first payment is three million
dollars.

He continues walking away.

INT. TELEPHONE REPAIR VAN - DAY

Gordon and Castro stare with rapt attention.

GORDON

Are you getting this on tape?

CASTRO

I love my job. I love it. The next time I'm having a bad day you gotta remind me of right now and I'll get over it.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Javier and Manolo stand guard outside the front door of the dining hall. Javi smokes a cigarette.

MANOLO

A group of us are going out tonight.

JAVIER

Who?

MANOLO

Guzman, Tomas, Esteban --

JAVIER

Your new friends.

MANOLO

Yeah. It should be fun. You wanna come?

JAVIER

Not this time.

INT. DINING HALL - BARRACKS - NIGHT

Francisco and Salazar eat at a beautifully set table. They are waited on by military officers who serve perfect flan at the end of the meal.

FRANCISCO

In my home I have B&W speakers. I recently purchased a compact disc burner. I can make my own cd's, with whatever music I like, as if I bought them at the store, only I

don't have to pay these crazy prices.

SALAZAR

We have much in common. We both attended school in the United States, and both of our fathers are engineers.

FRANCISCO

I got into stereo equipment when I was a kid. Some people don't notice the difference but it is very important to me.

SALAZAR

Of course it is. Have some more wine.

A soldier pours another glass of red for Francisco.

SALAZAR

Now, Francisco, my friend... I must know where these men are who killed my captains. Not where they were last week, but where they are today, and better still, tomorrow. You are clever. You can predict where they will be, can't you?

Francisco begins to weep.

Salazar slides a pad of paper toward Francisco who slowly begins writing.

EXT. TIJUANA NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Manolo and Javier pound on the front door of an apartment. A MAN opens the door and they grab him.

EXT. TIJUANA STREETS - DAY

A MAN walks down the street. Two SUV's pull up in front of him. He starts to run. Salazar's men jump out and chase him.

Francisco is in the backseat of one of the SUV's, watching.

EXT. TIJUANA - DAY

An SUV pulls up to a curb.

INT. SUV - DAY

Javier and Manolo and Francisco sit in the SUV. Francisco is weeping.

FRANCISCO

I can't go home. I don't want to go. Please don't make me.

He looks beseechingly at them.

JAVIER

It's not our decision.

FRANCISCO

I'll be killed.

JAVIER

Stop complaining. Nobody knows what you've been up to.

They push him out of the SUV.

CUT TO:

INT. SAN DIEGO JAIL - DAY

Castro and Gordon sit with Eduardo Ruiz in a conference room.

They are recording his statements.

RUIZ

Carlos, I mean Carl, started out in the family connection business: real estate in Tijuana, fishing boats out of Ensenada, hydroponic raspberries. He met up with the Obregon brothers of the Tijuana Cartel who were interested in two things: entering society and using his fishing boats.

GORDON

So you pay off our customs officials?

RUIZ

In Mexico law enforcement is an entrepreneurial activity, this is not so true for the USA.

(condescending)

Using regression analysis we made a study of the customs lanes at the border and calculated the odds of a

search. The odds are not high, and we found variables that reduce the odds. We hire drivers with nothing to lose. Then we throw a lot of product at the problem. Some get stopped. Enough get through. It's not difficult.

CASTRO

You'd think he wasn't sitting here facing life in prison.

RUIZ

This has worked for years and it will continue to work for years. NAFTA makes everything more difficult for you. The border is disappearing.

(pointing at them)

You people are like those Japanese soldiers left behind on deserted islands who think that World War II is still going on.

(with total disdain)

Let me be the first to tell you, your government surrendered this war a long time ago.

GORDON

(to Castro)

This attitude's not gonna help him any, is it?

RUIZ

I got greedy. I decided to bring a little in on my own and somebody tipped you off. That was my mistake. Carl would never be so stupid.

GORDON

He hired you. That was a mistake.

RUIZ

Carl and I were friends from childhood. He was loyal, that's not a mistake.

EXT. TIJUANA - SAN DIEGO BORDER CROSSING - DAY

Car after car, an unending multi-lane stream of vehicles moving into the U.S. Any of these cars could be carrying drugs.

INT. CUSTOMS CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

On an elevated walkway, this booth commands a view of everything. Robert and Sheridan listen to an OFFICIAL give the spiel.

OFFICIAL

The busiest land border crossing in the world. Over forty-one thousand vehicles per day, twenty-two thousand pedestrians on foot. I think we do a pretty good job but we know a lot of drugs are still getting through.

ROBERT

Any idea how much?

OFFICIAL

I've read official estimates but I wouldn't bet my house on them. I've heard the entire cocaine supply for the United States can fit into four tractor-trailers.

(gestures to the traffic)

At least a half-dozen of those cars right out there are carrying a load of dope, with drivers employed by people who don't give a damn if they're caught or not.

ROBERT

What do you look for?

OFFICIAL

We ask questions and measure the answers. When something doesn't ring true, a fact that doesn't make sense, a slight hesitation, then it's off to secondary for a closer look. Before NAFTA we had about 1.9 million trucks a year. Now it's almost double. Pretty soon there'll be Mexican truck companies that will have as much freedom in crossing the border as American truck companies.

ROBERT

Any way we can do it better?

OFFICIAL

Sure. More money in intelligence on their side of the border. So we have a better idea who we're looking for. More dogs. More people. Supposed to be getting some giant x-ray machines to run the trucks through. Outside of martial law that's about the best you're gonna do.

(beat)

But, I should tell you, there are two things that really have us on edge right now.

(beat)

In the last six months seizures have tripled, even though we're pulling over the same number of cars. What does that tell you?

ROBERT

That triple the amount of stuff is going through.

OFFICIAL

Right. But, that's not the biggest problem. One of our Intel officers picked up information from DEA that traffickers have come up with a process, a chemical process, to turn coke into something else. It doesn't smell like coke. It doesn't look like coke. And what's worse, it doesn't react to field test. It could be anything. Maybe it's already happening. I mean, how would we know?

Robert looks out at the border activity. It's anarchy.

CUT TO:

INT. AYALA STUDY - AFTERNOON

Helena is on the floor surrounded by papers. She's made piles of certain things: articles of incorporation, shipping/transfer documentation, bank statements, credit card statements. She holds a telephone to her ear --

HELENA

(to phone)

Yes, hi Jenny, account number 4168
2245 3173... I need a cash advance.

Helena walks into her kitchen. It's serene in the afternoon light. She fixes ice-cold lemonade and fills two plastic cups.

HELENA

What's the largest amount I can get?

(listens)

Okay, I guess that'll have to do.

Helena hangs up the phone. She takes the two cups of lemonade to the front door and steps outside.

EXT. AYALA HOME - AFTERNOON

Helena carries the cups down the driveway. She presses a button and the gates swing open.

INT. TELEPHONE REPAIR VAN - AFTERNOON

Gordon and Castro listen to their headsets. Suddenly --

VOICE (O.S.)

(over their headsets)

Okay. She's coming out. She's leaving her property. Okay, she seems to be heading for the van! She is approaching the van!

Castro and Gordon looks at each other.

GORDON

What do we do?

CASTRO

I don't know.

There's a KNOCKING at the door of the van.

GORDON

What do you think she wants?

CASTRO

She's your girlfriend. Open it, talk about your kids.

Gordon opens the door. Helena is standing there with the lemonade.

HELENA

I so hope I didn't startle you. I thought you might like some cold lemonade.

GORDON

Uh... Thank you.

She hands the cups to him. Helena gathers herself.

HELENA

I know this is a difficult situation and you're only doing your jobs. I don't bear you any ill-will, but I do have a small favor to ask.

CASTRO

You want to ask us a favor?

HELENA

A man threatened my children. These charges have attracted a lot of attention and it seems to be bringing all the nut-jobs out of the nut jar.

(beat)

Would you keep an eye out for anything out of the ordinary. I don't know what else to do.

GORDON

Of course, we will.

HELENA

Thank you.

They shut the door to the van and sit for a moment.

CASTRO

It's probably poisoned.

Gordon takes a big sip of his.

GORDON

It's good. Not too sweet.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. TIJUANA STREET - MORNING

This is a questionable neighborhood pushed up against the edge of poverty.

Anna hurries across the street.

EXT. JAVI'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Anna walks up the stairs of a rundown building. She passes two PROSTITUTES loitering in the stairwell.

She knocks on a door and Javi, half-dressed for work, answers. He's surprised to see her.

JAVIER

Anna. What's wrong? What do you want?

ANNA

I can't find Manolo.

JAVIER

He's not here.

ANNA

He never came home last night. Was he with you?

JAVIER

No.

He lets her into the apartment.

INT. JAVI'S APARTMENT - MORNING

A small, clean room with a partition for the sleeping area.

ANNA

I'm worried. Last time he was out late, I went through his clothes while he was asleep.

She pulls out a plastic packet with the scorpion insignia and 911 stamped on it.

Javier thinks a beat.

JAVIER

I'll find him.

EXT. ALLEY - TIJUANA - DAY

Javi slams Manolo against the side of building.

JAVIER

What the fuck are you doing?
You're supposed to be at work.
Look at you.

Manolo is sweaty and crazy-eyed.

MANOLO

It's no problem. I was just with
everybody we work with.

JAVIER

Oh, really. General Salazar was
there?

MANOLO

No, but a lot of other people. You
should come. You should come out
with us.

JAVIER

Go home. Get cleaned up. Get to
work. Salazar is heading down to
Mexico City next week and I'm not
getting left behind. Don't fuck
this up.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE KIOSK - TIJUANA - DAY

Javi buys a cup of coffee. He turns. Two men, who will
come to be known as AGENT HUGHES and AGENT JOHNSON, are
standing close. Agent Hughes speaks without looking at him.

HUGHES

The word going around is you're not
that happy in your work.

(beat)

Maybe we can help.

Hughes sticks a business card in Javi's pocket. Javi watches
them walk away. It's all done so smoothly and quickly, it's
over before Javi even knows what happened.

EXT. WEST END - CINCINNATI - DAY

It's the bad part of urban Cincinnati in the daylight: projects and blighted row houses. Seth and Caroline walk with a slouched, alert air. In their mind's eye they are prep-school gangsters following a familiar route.

SETH

You know my dad takes eight red cold pills every day? He and my mom have cocktail hour every night, from six to seven, set your clock, two bourbons --

CAROLINE

Maybe we could show up and smoke a little rock with them to unwind --

SETH

Yeah, then some dope to take the edge off at the end of a long day.

CAROLINE

Have you done your homework, honey?

SETH

Yes, mom --

CAROLINE

Then here's a little bump.

They turn down a street with a lot of activity on it.

SETH

Drugs weren't even a problem until a hundred years ago when the white men in power declared them a problem. Opiates. But, who was using 'em? Chinese immigrants. Slave labor. And the darkies up in the inner cities dancing to them evil rhythms of ju-ju music. People on the fringe. Artists. Decadent rich people. And who got scared? White men in power. Who's scared today? White men in power. If J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller ever admitted using, it'd be a whole different story.

TWO YOUNG STREET DEALERS fall in step with them. One talks without moving his lips --

STREET DEALER

What you want?

SETH

911, and the come down.

One dealer hurries ahead toward the doorway of a falling-down building.

STREET DEALER

How much?

SETH

Two hundred of C, hundred of the other.

The dealer looks them over. He looks behind them down the street.

CAROLINE

Come on... We've been here before.

STREET DEALER

Then, let's see your money.

Seth and Caroline are suspicious. They carefully show money they both have in their front right pockets. The dealer feints like he might grab it.

STREET DEALER

Up the steps. You the experts. You know what to do.

They hurry up the steps into the dingy brownstone.

INT. ROW HOUSE - DAY

They step into the narrow foyer between the outer door and the inner door. There are three other PEOPLE waiting nervously. An older JUNKIE shoots them a crazy look --

JUNKIE

What are you two, about twelve?

CAROLINE

Fuck off.

They wait. Finally, the first dealer appears in the inner door and lets them through.

INT. FIRST FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY

They wait in a line in the narrow, poorly lit corridor. At the end of the hall a hatch in a door slides back and the drugstore is open. People buy and leave.

Seth and Caroline approach. In the hatch is a hardened dealer, 20's, named SKETCH, which is tattooed on his forearm. He checks out Caroline's body.

SETH

Caroline, give me your money.

She hands over her money to Seth who pays and gets the drugs: gram baggies of rock stamped with a scorpion and "911," and wax-paper bindles of heroin, also labeled, "911."

Caroline has been watching the transaction. Sketch makes slow eye contact with Caroline. After a beat --

SKETCH

Goodbye... Caroline.

Seth and Caroline make their way out of the building.

SETH

(under his breath)

Yeah, right.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Seth and Caroline hold hands as they hurry down the steps. The lookout speaks without moving his lips.

STREET DEALER

Now, get the fuck out of here.

Caroline stops suddenly. She pulls Seth to her and kisses him hard. There's no better moment than the one right after scoring before you start using.

EXT. VILLA ELAINE - DAY

A flophouse of the seediest variety: wino in the doorway, prostitute taking care of business, everyone fresh out of institutions and graveyards.

INT. VILLA ELAINE - DAY

They approach the front desk which is behind six inches of glass.

SETH

We'd like room 205.

DESKMAN

Then you hand me twenty-eight dollars.

INT. ROOM 205 - VILLA ELAINE - DAY

They enter and the light bulb goes out. Seth fumbles his way to the mini-fridge, which he opens, throwing feeble light across the floor.

They check out the decrepit room: the sloping mattress, the black and white television bolted to the bureau. The mini-fridge. Caroline bounces on the bed. They are teenagers.

Seth prepares the drugs by the light of the mini-fridge.

SETH

I love this place.

Seth dumps the drugs on the bedside table. From other pockets he extracts aluminum foil, lighter, tube. She trails away watching him fix the first hit.

SETH

Did Courtney Love play Nancy in Syd and Nancy?

CAROLINE

I think so. If she didn't she should have.

(checks her watch)

I've only got maybe an hour. Then volleyball practice is over and I have to be home.

SETH

Why? Nobody's there.

He prepares the first hit. She does it and lies back. He does one.

CAROLINE

(blowing out the hit)

The maid... They ask her what time I get back. She spies for them.

Seth starts kissing her. They try to get into it, but both of them are thinking about the drugs.

CAROLINE

I wish we could stay here. Just be here forever and ever. Make it a little home.

She leans over to snort a tiny line of heroin.

SETH

I want to have sex and do a hit right as we're coming.

Caroline's distracted by the line she's snorting. After a while...

CAROLINE

Okay.

Seth begins undoing her jeans.

CUT TO:

INT. EPIC BUNKER LOBBY - DAY

SUPERTITLE: EL PASO, TEXAS

Robert and Sheridan listen to the official tour of the EPIC center delivered by the SPECIAL-AGENT-IN-CHARGE, 40, a sincere weight-lifter with a sincere crew-cut.

SPECIAL-AGENT-IN-CHARGE

...Over 200 DEA field agents, a budget of almost 100 million dollars and state of the art communications equipment make the El Paso Information Center the Drug Enforcement Administration's flagship for the 21st century.

INT. EPIC BUNKER CAFETERIA - DAY

A huge lunchroom. Long plastic institutional tables and agents minding their own business,

Robert, Sheridan, and their Epic Guide walk through. They pass a wall of black and white head shots --

ROBERT

Who are these guys?

SPECIAL-AGENT-IN-CHARGE

Agents who died in the field.

EXT. BINOCULAR POV - DAY

of large mansion with manicured grounds. The back lawn is filled with children, balloons, a merry-go-round, and pony rides. It's a sumptuous children's birthday party.

SPECIAL-AGENT-IN-CHARGE

That house, that you see from the DEA headquarters, belonged to Porfirio Madrigal -- the Lord of the Skies, largest trafficker in Mexico.

ANGLE ON ROBERT

looking through the binoculars.

ROBERT

He died in a liposuction surgery, right?

SPECIAL-AGENT-IN-CHARGE

Right. Now it's used by somebody from the Juarez Cartel, one of his lieutenants... Who knows?

(beat)

Every damn day there's birthday party. At first I thought they must have three hundred children, then I realized they're taunting us. Three miles away and we can't touch them. Ha, ha, ha.

BINOCULAR POV: a child running in circles holding a clutch of colored balloons.

ROBERT

Who do we interface with on their side?

SPECIAL-AGENT-IN-CHARGE

What do you mean?

ROBERT

I mean, who runs interdiction on the Mexico side?

SPECIAL-AGENT-IN-CHARGE

I don't know. I don't think there's any one person.

(thinks)

See the problem is the Juarez cartel owns everything and everybody, all the property on the Mexican side, sometimes all the property on both sides. Warehouses, transportation, even tunnels. It's very organized.

EXT. TRAMAC - DAY

Robert, walking with purpose, leads his group to their plane.

INT. MILITARY JET - DAY

Robert and Sheridan and several DEA, Law Enforcement, and Military Officials. It's a nice plane, used for important people and Robert has the best seat.

ROBERT

I want everyone thinking out the box for a second. What are we gonna do about Mexico?

(silence)

Come on, guys. Out of the box.

The men on the plane just stare at him. Finally the REP FROM DEA leans forward.

REP FROM DEA

Unlimited funds?

ROBERT

Unlimited.

REP FROM DEA

From a DEA standpoint we need a vetted task force and matching funds. And cut the red tape on getting them equipment and training.

Robert turns to the others.

ROBERT

Come on. I want to hear from everyone: FBI. Customs. Treatment. Is there anyone from treatment on this plane?

(no one answers)

Then I want an answer for why there isn't anyone from treatment.

(beat)

Look, we know we have to bust one of these cartels, Juarez or Tijuana, not just as a symbol, but hell yes, also as a symbol - they are symbols - and there's nothing wrong with sending a message. That's why when Carlos Ayala hired Michael Adler lead defense, I flew Ben Williams to San Diego to prosecute. Because he's the best we have, he's our symbol that we're serious about putting the top people away.

(beat)

So, as of right now, this flight only, consider the dam on new ideas thrown open.

Still, no one else says anything. They watch Robert impassively.

ROBERT

If I'm not mistaken, we got DEA, Pentagon, U.S. Attorneys office, about a billion dollars of budget right here. So what are you people waiting for?

CUT TO:

OMITTED

EXT. SAN DIEGO OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Establishing shot of a tall glass building in the downtown skyline of San Diego.

INT. ARNIE METZGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Helena and Arnie enter his office. The furniture is sleek mid-century modern, and the view of the harbor is extraordinary.

ARNIE

On a clear day you can see Mexico City.

Arnie stands very close to Helena and looks at her profile.

ARNIE

This place is swept twice a day. I learned that in Miami in '85. Then

the U.S. shut down the whole Caribbean, but it's a big game of wack-a-mole. Knock it down in Miami, it pops up here. And San Diego is so much more relaxing.

HELENA

Arnie, I need money. Somebody threatened my children. They want a first payment of three million dollars.

ARNIE

Helena, if I had it I would give it to you, but I don't have that kind of money.

HELENA

Arnie, help me. Doesn't anyone owe us money?

ARNIE

Yes, I told you before, there are people who owe you money but they're not paying. There's too much heat on Carl.

HELENA

Please. Tell me who Carl sells to.

Arnie thinks.

ARNIE

Even if I knew I wouldn't tell you. You do not want to come into contact with these people. Only Carl knows who they are. That's his real asset. Ruiz doesn't know them. They don't know Ruiz. Church and State.

HELENA

What about legitimate businesses? We own a construction concern, real estate --

ARNIE

Laundromats for the washing of money. Unfortunately, Carl had only one successful business.

HELENA

Don't you have some good news? Isn't there something positive you could say.

There isn't. Helena looks Arnie in the eyes.

HELENA

(vulnerable)

Sometimes I wonder what I'll do if Carl doesn't get out. I'm not very adept at being on my own. I've always had a man in my life. Always.

ARNIE

I remember when I first met you: little Helen Watts from the wrong side of somewhere. I had a feeling even then that your survival instincts were pretty well honed.

HELENA

I'm glad you think so, but I'm picturing a debt-ridden, thirty-two year-old mother whose ex-husband is being compared to Pablo Escobar.

(beat)

And I'm wondering who would want to be with someone like that?

It takes a great effort for Arnie not to answer.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

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OMITTED

INT. ARMORED SUV - MEXICO - DAY

Javier and Manolo ride through a nice neighborhood in Mexico City. Javi isn't familiar with the roads and drives cautiously.

A young lady, ROSARIO, early 20's, sexy and vulnerable, rides in the back of the SUV.

ROSARIO

You two don't like me, do you?

Manolo laughs and looks her up and down. Javi watches her in the rearview mirror.

JAVIER

We don't have an opinion on you.

ROSARIO

(to Javi)

Maybe it's because I'm getting an apartment nicer than anything you'll ever see in your life?

Javi says nothing.

ROSARIO

(re: the neighborhood)

I can't believe the old man kept his promise.

JAVIER

The General is a man of his word.

ROSARIO

They will say anything to get what they want, but then you remind them, it's always tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow.

(beat)

Occupational hazard, I guess.

Javi just looks at her in the rearview mirror.

ROSARIO

His friend is giving us the apartment so it's not like he paid. It's more like a favor.

Javier pulls the SUV to the curb in front of a beautiful colonial-style apartment complex in the verdant neighborhood.

EXT. VERDANT NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Birds are chirping. Javi waits in the car as Manolo takes the young lady's bags from the vehicle and carries them up the walkway to the arched doorway. He knocks on the heavy wooden door.

ROSARIO

You don't have the keys. Oh that's perfect. Are you an idiot?

Manolo knocks again. They wait a long beat.

MANOLO

There's supposed to be someone here to let you in.

Finally, the door swings open and a BODYGUARD is standing there. Rosario SQUEALS and sweeps past him into the vast space. The bodyguard motions for Manolo to put the bags inside the door.

Manolo sets the bags down and sees another MAN standing a few feet away. The man wears sunglasses. His complexion is strange and his neck is bandaged.

The body guard escorts Manolo back outside where he hears Rosario's happy LAUGHTER drifting down from an upstairs window.

INT. SUV - DAY

Manolo gets into the truck. He's shaken by what he's just seen.

MANOLO

Madrigal's alive.

JAVIER

What?

MANOLO

Porfirio Madrigal is not dead. I just saw him.

A long beat as Javier considers this.

JAVIER

This is why Salazar is so interested in cleaning up Tijuana. Madrigal, who's supposed to be dead, owns him. And Madrigal is making a move on Juan Obregon.

Javier calmly drives away.

MANOLO

Javi! Come on. Don't pull this you

don't care bullshit. This is
incredible information. It must be.
Javi --

JAVIER
We keep our mouths shut.

CUT TO:

INT. BARBARA'S CAR - NIGHT

Barbara drives Robert home from the airport. There's a sense
they've been silent for a while.

ROBERT
I think we may have found our Mexican
Drug Czar. It's this General,
Salazar. At least I'll have somebody
on the other side I can talk to.

BARBARA
Does this mean you're going to be
gone more?

A long silence.

ROBERT
Possibly.

Another silence.

BARBARA
You might want to pencil in a little
face-time with your daughter.

ROBERT
Barbara --

BARBARA
Because I'm at the edge of my
capabilities, Robert.

ROBERT
The first thing we have to do is
present a unified front.

BARBARA
If you start in on the war metaphors
I'm going to drive this car into a
fucking telephone pole.

ROBERT

Look, I'm as worried as you are --

BARBARA

No, I don't think so. Leave me alone, give me money. That's what I get from our daughter. She has a way of shutting me out that seems very familiar.

ROBERT

Yeah, well, she has a way of self-medicating that probably seems familiar, too.

She looks at him, stung.

BARBARA

I'm not the one who has to have three scotches just to walk in the door and say hello.

ROBERT

I have a drink before dinner to take the edge off my day. That's different.

BARBARA

Oh, it is?

ROBERT

Yeah, because the alternative is to be bored to death.

EXT. WAKEFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

He car pulls into the driveway. Robert gets out. Barbara doesn't. He looks back at her.

BARBARA

Why don't you go in and tell your daughter how bored you are.

She puts the car in reverse and drives away. He stands for a moment, steaming.

INT. WAKEFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

Robert Wakefield steps inside his home. It's very QUIET. He checks the mail on the hall table.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Robert walks down the hallway. He steps into Caroline's bedroom.

INT. CAROLINE WAKEFIELD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Robert stands outside her closed bathroom door.

There is nothing, then from the other side of the door, the faint sound of a lighter CLICKING. AGAIN and AGAIN, then a COUGH.

INT. CAROLINE WAKEFIELD'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Caroline sits on the toilet. Glamour Magazine on her lap.

She's wild-eyed and paranoid. The exhaust fan is running.

The aluminum foil is on the sink. The last little bit of heroin in a wax-paper bundle sits beside it.

She's listening hard for any SOUND in the house. What she's wondering is if someone is outside the door listening.

She puts a piece of crack on the foil and listens hard once more before lighting it. She does the hit.

And seems to feel better.

Suddenly there's a POUNDING on the door. The VOICE of her father muffled through the solid wood.

ROBERT (V.O.)

(muffled by the door)

Caroline. Open this door immediately.

Caroline is up like a shot. She looks around. The POUNDING on the door gets stronger.

She crumples the foil and drops it in the toilet.

The bathroom door SOUNDS like it's about to cave inward.

CAROLINE

(faking the best she can)

Who is it? I'm going to the bathroom.

She's coping now, full parallel process mode: she dumps the last heroin on the back of her hand and snorts it, checking

her nose in the mirror as she reaches for a can of air freshener which she sprays into the air.

CAROLINE

One minute.

She takes the remaining crack, lighters, tubes, little smudgy druggy bits of paraphernalia and carefully places it all in a hiding place above the bathroom cabinet.

She pauses a beat, then opens the door, and tries to brush by her father while avoiding his eyes.

CAROLINE

Excuse me --

Robert grabs her by the arms. He pushes her against the wall and looks at her pupils. He looks at her fingernails. The blister on her thumb from working the lighter is red and irritated.

ROBERT

You're not going anywhere, young lady.

She stands there; she's very high.

Robert sniffs the air. He throws open cabinets, searching for drugs. He sees the smudge mark on the counter left by the charred aluminum foil.

ROBERT

Where is it? Where are the drugs?
(yelling)
Where are they?

CAROLINE

Fuck you. I wasn't doing anything.
You're like the Gestapo.

Robert KICKS the cabinets.

ROBERT

Fuck me? Oh, okay. Fuck me. Fuck you.

Robert is losing it. He throws stuff around the bathroom and then, for the first time, looks up. He sees the long light in the box atop the medicine cabinet and it dawns on him.

ROBERT

I'm going to ask you one time to tell me the truth so that I can help you.

She just stares.

ROBERT

Okay, young lady, that's it.

CAROLINE

Like I give a fuck.

Robert reaches above the medicine cabinet and pulls out a charred spoon. It confuses him. He throws it into the sink.

He pulls out another spoon. He pulls out crumpled bindles, rolled up, encrusted dollar bills, exhausted lighters, a pill bottle, an empty pint of vodka.

The detritus of drug addiction keeps on coming, filling up the sink. Robert stares at it, the amount and complexity has him momentarily baffled.

ROBERT

What is wrong with you? What?

(beat)

You're going away. You're getting help somewhere.

CAROLINE

You can't make me.

ROBERT

Oh, yes I can.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. - SAN DIEGO - DAY

Javier drinks toward downtown. He's sipping a Burger King soft-drink. On the seat next to him is a shopping bag from Target. He takes an exit. Javier pulls into the underground parking lot of a fancy office tower.

INT. POLICE SEDAN - DAY

Javi drives down to the third floor underground. He pulls into a parking spot next to a white sedan. He slides open the cargo door of his van.

The cargo door of the sedan opens. Javi quickly gets into the sedan.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Special Agents Hughes and Johnson welcome Javi.

JAVIER

Where are we going?

Hughes sticks out his hand.

HUGHES

Special Agent Hughes, Drug Enforcement
Administration of the United States.

JAVIER

(ignoring the niceties)
Where are you taking me?

The agents exchange a look.

JOHNSON

Somewhere safe.

JAVIER

Where?

JOHNSON

A place we have, that we know is
protected.

JAVIER

No.

HUGHES

It's really safe.

JAVIER

Not for me.

JOHNSON

Okay. Where would you like to go?

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - HOTEL - DAY

Javi and Agents Johnson and Hughes stand in the middle of the shallow end of a large swimming pool. KIDS in waterwings splash nearby.

JAVIER

It's important that we work together.
Mexico. America. One hand washing
the other.

JOHNSON

We agree.

JAVIER

So... maybe you tell me about your
informants in our operations.

JOHNSON

(confused by this)
We thought maybe you'd have that
kind of information for us.

JAVIER

(feigning surprise)
This is a very different proposition.

Johnson and Hughes exchange a glance.

JOHNSON

We pay for that kind of information.

A fat kid in an inner-tube floats behind them.

JOHNSON

Is that what you're talking about,
Javier?

Javi makes eye contact with one agent, then the other.

JAVIER

Ten years ago Tijuana had no drug
problem. Now it is epidemic.

(beat)

Ten years ago America takes a hammer
to Pablo Escobar, a hammer to the
Miami drug trade, and you allowed
everything to move to my country.
You dumped the problem at our feet.
Now, drug use is epidemic. Now, the
treatment centers are full and get
no state money. They survive on

donations and what they get for building doghouses to sell to the U.S.

(beat)

We need lights for the parks so kids can play at night. So they can play baseball. So it's safe. Everybody likes parks. Everybody likes baseball.

(beat)

What I'm talking about is I would like to see somebody take an interest in Tijuana. That's what I'm talking about.

Javi starts to get out of the pool.

HUGHES

Javi, You want to come see us again, you're going on the box. No more of this water-wing bullshit.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Javier gets out of the DEA sedan and back into his. He drives away.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Agents Hughes turns to Agent Johnson.

JOHNSON

You wanna tell me what the hell that was all about?

HUGHES

He's got something. We just have to be patient.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Helena and Carl each hold a telephone receiver as they stare at each other through a thick pane of meshed glass. Helena is barely holding it together. It's hard for Carl to see her like this. After a beat --

CARL

How's David?

HELENA

How's David? How's David? He's terrific, Carl.

CARL

Helena --

HELENA

We watched his father get dragged away by federal agents. I don't even know how to begin to tell him where you are or when you're coming back... Or if you're coming back.

She can't even look at him.

CARL

(beat)

We'll get through this, I promise. I'll make it up to you --

HELENA

(snapping)

How? Supportive letters from prison while I'm being kicked out of our home?

(beat)

Do you have any idea what is happening out here? Our credit cards are maxed. The people at the bank, you should see their faces when I walk in there. I have a letter from the government telling me that anything I sell from our house will be taken against an income tax lien. Our friends are behaving like the crowd at a public hanging. Nobody will help us. Nobody will take us in. Nobody wants anything to do with us. So tell me, Carl, how you're gonna make it up to me.

(losing it)

Tell me again how we'll get through this, and maybe while you're at it you can put your hand up against the glass so we can have a tender moment of connection.

CARL

Helena --

HELENA

Tell me what to do, Carl. I need guidance, not a fucking platitude.

(beat)

I'm not bringing a child into the kind of life I grew up with. I won't do it. I want our life back.

Carl looks at his wife as if he is trying to weigh her. He thinks, then leans forward --

CARLOS

I built our house and I don't want to lose it. Every stone, every brick, every board.

(carefully)

My business... That would take a lot of private study...

(he blinks)

That you don't have time for. I suggest you look into the Coronel...

(he blinks again)

Into selling it. If you can stomach it, you should look into it.

That painting is very valuable.

HELENA

I don't understand.

CARLOS

Look into the Coronel; otherwise, there is nothing to do.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY OAKS - DAY

A peaceful wooded campus with a unobtrusive sign reading, "Serenity Oaks Treatment Facility."

INT. MEETING ROOM - SERENITY OAKS - DAY

There are sayings on the wall: "Easy Does It;" "Let Go and Let God;" "Turn it over;" "One Day at a Time..." "H.A.L.T. -- Hungry? Angry? Lonely? Tired?"

Caroline, wearing a thick, woolly sweater, and the other PATIENTS sit around on beat-up couches and chairs in a loose circle. It's a mixed BUNCH: trucker meth-head, rocker dope-fiend, yuppie crack-head, fat, thin, rich, middle-class, and

all white. Caroline is the youngest.

MARTY, 40's, an overweight alcoholic, finishes his "share."

MARTY

So it was my birthday an my ex-wife was getting remarried and I was in some church basement telling a bunch of strangers how it was a good day because I didn't have to eat out of a dumpster. That was enough to send me out on big one.

(beat)

I've been thinking a lot about the first step: that I came to believe I was powerless over alcohol and that my life had become unmanageable.

(beat)

See my disease tells me I don't have a disease. That I'm fine. That it's my birthday and I can have one little drink, then one little line, then one little Valium, then two more fat lines, then two more 10 mil Valium... Six months later I wake up in a sober living house in Philly. And I'm from Dallas, people.

(beat)

It's a disease -- an allergy of the body and an obsession of the mind. I know that now. So my name's Marty and today I'm a grateful recovering alcoholic who didn't eat out of a dumpster. Thanks.

And Marty looks to Caroline who didn't relate to one word he said.

CAROLINE

(slowly, very nervous)

Hi. I'm Caroline. I'm not sure I'm an alcoholic.

(beat)

I mean I don't really like to drink. For someone my age it's so much easier to get drugs than beer. I don't know, this is really weird and I'm really nervous...

People in the room nod encouragingly.

CAROLINE

I guess I'm angry. I mean I think I'm really angry about a lot of stuff, but I don't know what exactly.

She blushes, and stares out the window.

CUT TO:

INT. AYALA LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Helena follows an ART APPRAISER through her formal living room as he inspects paintings and makes notations. He is very excited and moves quickly from one to the next.

ART APPRAISER

Tamayo. Carrington. A simply wonderful collection of Mexican Modern. Give me three months. I know several collectors in South America, very discreet.

HELENA

I don't have three months.

ART APPRAISER

It takes time to find the proper collection.

HELENA

How much will you give me in cash? Today.

The appraiser taps out some numbers on a calculator and shows the figure to Helena.

HELENA

You must be joking. That's a fraction of their value.

ART APPRAISER

I'm sorry, but that is the figure I can get today.

Helena turns her back. She walks to a window and looks out, then surveys the contents of her beautiful home.

HELENA

(snapping)

Get out. Get out of my house.

Helena turns and sees David in the doorway. She goes to him.

HELENA

It's all right. We're have a disagreement, that's all.

The art appraiser passes them on his way out.

INT. AYALA MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Helena wakes up in the middle of the night with a start. Her eyes are wide open. She has had a thought --

She climbs out of bed and quickly puts on a robe.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Helena walks quickly and quietly down the hallway. She passes David's room. She opens a door at the end of the hall --

INT. CARL'S PRIVATE STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Helena enters the room. She hits a desk lamp and we're in a very comfortable and masculine upstairs study: bookshelves holding hundreds of art books; comfortable chairs; MacIntosh stereo; discreet flatscreen HD TV.

Helena stares at a painting on one of the bookshelves. It is "Boy with a Hoop," a small portrait by Rafael Colonel.

She goes to it and looks from different angles. She reaches out and jiggles the oil. Nothing happens. She looks behind the painting at the backing.

She notices that one corner is not glued down. She picks up a letter opener and pries the paper back. An envelope slips out.

Inside the envelope: neat, thin strips of paper dense with information in a miniscule type and a magnetic key card.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Robert and Sheridan ride in the back of the chopper. Each looks out his own window.

A newspaper on the seat between them shows a front page photo of General Salazar, exultant, and the headline reads in Spanish, "Salazar Named Chief of Anti-Narcotics Operations."

EXT. MEXICO CITY - DAY

Establishing shot of a military helicopter landing on the roof of an office building in downtown Mexico City.

INT. HEADQUARTERS, FEADS, - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Robert Wakefield and General Salazar stroll through the new headquarters where boxes are still being unpacked. Javier and Sheridan trail along behind them.

SALAZAR

I recruited the best men in Mexico for my task force and put them through a rigorous screening process. Not only physical, but also psychological.

ROBERT

I'd like to bring you up to Washington, walk you around our side of things, and share some of the information we've been able to develop on your cartels.

SALAZAR

That would be very helpful to me.

(beat)

Also, I received the offer from DEA and the FBI to train some of my men at Quantico. I think this will be extremely useful, a good way for us to absorb some of your methods.

INT. SALAZAR'S I.N.C.D. OFFICE - DAY

The office hasn't been decorated yet.

SALAZAR

I've been too busy to completely settle in.

Salazar proffers a chair and they sit next to each other like Brezhnev and Nixon. PHOTOGRAPHERS begin SNAPPING

pictures. After a few moments, Salazar waves them away, and they lower their cameras and leave.

ROBERT

You've been making very good progress against the Tijuana cartel.

SALAZAR

Yes, I am confident that Juan Obregon will be taken into custody before the end of the year. But, you must understand that it is very difficult because of corruption in the police force. We get a tip that he is one place, then we get there and he is already gone, having been warned by someone on our side.

ROBERT

Hopefully the exchange of training methods and information between our countries will help with this problem.

SALAZAR

Yes, I hope so as well.

ROBERT

Let me ask you a related question. We've talked about the supply side, but what about demand? What is your policy for treating addiction?

SALAZAR

Addicts treat themselves... they overdose and then there's one less to worry about.

Robert cannot respond.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY OAKS - WALKWAY - DAY

Caroline ambles alone down a walkway at the treatment facility.

She looks through the trees that surround facility and notices cars going by.

CUT TO:

INT. LOW-RENT HOTEL - DAY

Gordon and another DEA AGENT escort Ruiz up the stairs of a large, older hotel.

RUIZ

This is ridiculous. Why is there no elevator?

GORDON

When the DEA gets into the narcotics business, then we'll stay at the Four Seasons.

They walk down a hotel hallway. Two more AGENTS stand outside Room 407. Gordon opens the door and they enter.

INT. SUITE OF CHEAP HOTEL ROOMS - DAY

There are more AGENTS inside and old food and coffee containers. Gordon gives Ruiz a tour. There are several rooms. A bored Castro sits at a table staring at a Scrabble board.

CASTRO

Eddie, how you like your new home?
I hope you hate it as much as I do.

Ruiz looks around with disgust. He's accustomed to finer places. He goes to a window and looks out.

RUIZ'S POV: of the Federal Court building not far away.

RUIZ

This is not what my lawyers negotiated.

Gordon pours himself a cup of coffee.

GORDON

Fuck your lawyers. You aren't getting any cappuccino or Biscotti either.

INT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - DAY

A packed, tense courtroom listens to testimony from a government witness, FRANK, 50's, very matter-of-fact and truthful.

FRANK

He first came to me in January.

That would've been nineteen eighty-seven. He wanted to rent warehouse space along the harbor. I didn't ask too many questions; I'm a businessman also.

INT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - DAY

Another witness, MRS. BERRY, 40's, pedantic on the stand --

MRS. BERRY

I told Mr. Ayala there were irregularities in his tax return. And I couldn't represent him unless we could explain this...

INT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - DAY

SHEILA, 38, a mousy secretary, is on the stand. Carlos sits at the defendant's table listening raptly. Gordon and Castro sit in the back watching Helena who pays close attention to the witness --

SHEILA

I was the company secretary from 1991 to 1994. I supposedly worked for all six companies. But... they weren't... I mean, it was just one empty office with a desk and a telephone. We never sold anything the whole time I was there. Sometimes people came and got paid. I don't really know what we did.

PROSECUTOR

Did Mr. Ayala say where the money came from?

SHEILA

No, and I didn't ask.

PROSECUTOR

Where do you think it came from?

Carl's lawyer, Adler, is on his feet --

KAUFMAN

This speculation --

PROSECUTOR

I'll rephrase. Did you feel like

you were engaged in a legal enterprise?

Sheila is reluctant to answer.

SHEILA

No, not really.

Helena catches Carl's eye and they share a grim moment.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. CARL'S UPSTAIRS STUDY - DAY

Helena sits at Carl's office desk. On the desk in front of her are the lists she found and an encrypted cell phone.

Helena picks up the phone. Her hands are shaking. She is crying as she dials. A voice on the other end answers.

FRANCISCO (V.O.)

Who is this?

Helena gathers her courage, then...

HELENA

A friend... of Carlos Ayala.

There is a long pause.

FRANCISCO (V.O.)

Yes.

HELENA

I'm on a special phone, may I speak freely?

FRANCISCO (V.O.)

You may speak.

HELENA

I have a job for you and I don't have much time.

EXT. BOTANICAL GARDEN - DAY

Helena watches David look at the wide variety of plants and flowers. All around them a GROUP of 3rd graders, in identical T-shirts, enjoy a field trip.

FRANCISCO (V.O.)

I love this place. Don't turn around.

Behind her Francisco Flores takes a photo with an instant camera.

FRANCISCO

You were followed by the police, but they won't hear us over the children. I want to use a bomb.

HELENA

You're kidding. Can't you shoot him or something?

FRANCISCO

I don't really like guns. You shoot someone in the head three times and some doctor will keep them alive.

HELENA

When will you do it?

FRANCISCO

I don't know. Eduardo Ruiz is the only real witness against Carl. The security is very tight. There may not be a way.

HELENA

There's always a way. If people get to the Pope or the President, you can get to him.

Francisco laughs.

FRANCISCO

Careful... You're sounding like your husband, Mrs. Ayala.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. JAVI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anna sits in the living room, staring. She appears too upset to speak. The apartment is cleaner. There have been other changes. There's a new rug.

JAVIER

What? What is it?

ANNA

It's very hard for me to come and tell you this.

Javier just watches her.

ANNA

It's Manolo. He's going to do something stupid. I'm worried that he'll get himself killed.

He keeps watching.

ANNA

He's saying he's going to talk to the Americans. Become an informer.

He says they pay a lot of money.

JAVIER

Why does he need money?

ANNA

He has debts. He has gambling debts. He owes a lot of money.

JAVIER

How much?

ANNA

Nine thousand dollars.

A long beat.

JAVIER

What is he planning on telling them?

ANNA

Well, you know, he's going to say about Madrigal... and Salazar.

Javier just looks at her.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBERT'S OFFICE IN WASHINGTON - DAY

Robert is on the telephone, listening. He is not happy. Sheridan watches him.

ROBERT

(into phone)

Nobody saw her leave?

(beat)

Yes... I understand.

He hangs up. He stands and reaches for his jacket.

ROBERT

I have to go. I have to go home.

INT. WAKEFIELD KITCHEN - NIGHT

Robert and Barbara sit at the kitchen table.

BARBARA

Should we bring the police into this?

ROBERT

No, not yet.

EXT. WEST END STREETS - DAY

Robert drives through the streets in his Cadillac DeVille.

INT. DEVILLE - DAY

Robert rides in glum silence. He looks at passersby who are almost all black and almost all stare back at the white man in his Cadillac.

A group of young men stare threateningly as he rolls past.

On the street, in the lee of a Brownstone staircase, a deal is going down.

ROBERT AND SETH ABRAHMS - DAY

sit in a coffee shop.

SETH

(genuinely surprised)
She's not at that place you sent
her?

ROBERT
She snuck away. And we haven't seen
her. She hasn't come home.

SETH
Oh, man --

ROBERT
She hasn't called you?

SETH
I tried to talk to her when she was
up there, but they wouldn't put me
through.
(beat)
I'm surprised she hasn't called.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON ROBERT IN THE CAR - DAY

He turns a corner and is suddenly in a drive-thru drug market.
Dealers, HUSTLERS, run at the windows from both sides,
signaling.

HUSTLERS
What you want? Rock? Rock? Hey,
what you want?

ROBERT AND SETH - DAY

in the coffee shop.

ROBERT
Can you tell me anything? Do you
have any ideas?

SETH
I don't know what to say.

ROBERT
I'm not the police. I don't care
about experimentation. She's a kid.
I'm worried to death.

SETH
You won't say anything to my parents?

ROBERT

I don't give a fuck about your parents --

SETH

We sometimes went downtown to score.

ROBERT

What?

SETH

The West End. We buy it off the streets.

(beat)

I can stop, you know, and she can't. Two people, really similar, we can talk about anything, but for me it's like a weekend thing, then I get my shit together, and for her it's different --

ROBERT

You don't know what the hell you're talking about. You're a cocky seventeen year-old and you don't have a clue what the stakes are. You don't know the value of the life you've yet to throw away. And neither does she.

ROBERT IN HIS CAR - DAY

It is surrounded. Robert stares. A face presses up against the window.

FACE

(through the window)

What do you want?

ROBERT

(through the window)

What do you mean, what do I want?

FACE

Rock or dope, man?

ROBERT

I don't want anything.

ROBERT AND SETH

SETH

Hey man, I'm sorry. I'm just trying

to help.

ROBERT

You want to help? Stay the fuck away from her.

ROBERT IN HIS CAR

ROBERT

I'm looking for my daughter.

The dealer looks at him with disgust, turns his back, and waves everyone else away.

Robert slams his fist against the steering wheel. He slams it again and again. He stops and pulls away, just as

AT THE INTERSECTION

behind Robert's car, Caroline crosses the street toward Sketch's house.

INT. SKETCH'S BEDROOM - DAY

A single candle lights the room. Caroline is underneath Sketch the drug dealer. He is pounding away. As she clutches his back and holds on, her expression is both surprised and druggy, and SOUNDS escape her mouth that she wouldn't believe she could make.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Sketch continues his business. The KNOCKING is more insistent. Finally, he stops and gets up and goes to the door. Caroline lies back. She's in a bed with black sheets in a room with nothing else in it but a dresser and some duffle bags.

Sketch opens the door --

SKETCH

What the fuck do you want?

SOMEBODY outside says something. Sketch walks over to a duffle bag and extracts some product. Caroline's eyes are glued to it as Sketch hands it through the door. Sketch sees her staring at the drugs.

He comes back to bed.

SKETCH

You want some of that?

Caroline nods.

SKETCH

What you gonna do to get some of that?

CAROLINE

Please --

SKETCH

What you gonna do?

She turns her back to him, pouting. He laughs.

SKETCH

Maybe a taste.

He reaches over beside the bed where there is a small tray.

On the tray is a rig, spoon, several powders, and an eye dropper. He pulls the candle over and rapidly fixes a speedball. He pulls the fluid into the neck of the syringe and holds it up the light. It has Caroline transfixed.

SKETCH

Feed this to you like a little bird.

He squirts the tiniest amount of fluid into the air. It arcs in the candlelight.

CAROLINE

Don't --

SKETCH

You want this?

She nods.

SKETCH

This is the Express train. Baby turnin' pro and getting down in a big, big hole.

Her concentration is entirely, hypnotically focused on the syringe.

Sketch moves the syringe toward her lips.

SKETCH

Kiss it. Kiss your new mommy hello.

Caroline moves her mouth toward the side of the syringe, her lips part.

Sketch pulls the sheet back, exposing her legs. He grips one powerful hand around her ankle and squeezes... Veins stand out on her foot.

He slides the needle into the largest vein and slowly depresses the plunger.

Caroline watches, then her head tilts back, then forward, she GROANS, sexually and slumps against the pillows, her eyes half-open, her lips twitching.

Sketch puts the rig back on the tray, then admires Caroline's beauty for a second before starting to fuck her again.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Gordon and Castro and two other AGENTS escort Ruiz out of the hotel and usher him into a waiting cruiser.

They pull out in a caravan and move through the streets toward the courthouse.

EXT. COURTHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

The cruiser pulls into a fenced and gated parking lot.

Gordon, Castro and Ruiz, walking with a limp, cross to the building entrance.

As they push inside, Francisco Flores, in a conservative grey suit passes them going outside.

The parking lot is empty of people. The guards at the gate talk about something distracting.

Francisco passes by the cruiser and drops his keys. Kneeling down he extracts a small, powerful, magnetized bomb from his jacket. He attaches it to the underside of the vehicle, stands and walks toward the guard gate.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The court is filled to capacity. Helena and Metzger watch from the gallery.

The JUDGE bangs his gavel. Adler is on his feet.

ADLER

Your honor, it has come to our attention that your honor, while in private practice, previously represented the town of Seal Beach in their stop-work suit against the Police Department of Seal Beach. We believe this disqualifies you from hearing this case and we therefore move for a temporary suspension while this is investigated.

The judge is surprised to hear this.

JUDGE

Mr. Adler, this is a most unusual motion.

ADLER

Nonetheless, your honor, we feel that our client deserves every fairness afforded under the law.

JUDGE

If this is in any way designed to delay the testimony of Eduardo Ruiz...

The judge considers.

JUDGE

We'll recess until 9:00 am Monday morning. And I'll see counsel in chambers.

He slams the gavel down again.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Gordon, Castro, other AGENTS and Ruiz come down the rear steps of the courthouse and walk across the street toward the parking lot.

CASTRO

Remember when we sat on that mob guy, that chef, for like six months?

GORDON

Oh, man, I've never eaten so good in my life.

(to Ruiz)

Why don't you develop a useful skill?

CASTRO

Yeah, like turning into a beautiful woman.

They reach the car.

RUIZ

Would you mind if today we walked?
It's one block. I could use the
fresh air.

OMITTED

INT. FRANCISCO'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Across the street, Francisco, encrypted cell phone to his ear, watches from his own car as Gordon, Castro, and Ruiz stand by their car without getting in, then walk away from the car.

FRANCISCO

(into phone)

They're not getting into the car.
What are they doing? They're walking
right at me.

The men start across the street toward Francisco.

INT. HELENA'S CAR - DAY

Helena drives her car through downtown San Diego.

HELENA

(into phone)

You've got a gun. Get out of the
car and shoot him in the head.

INT. FRANCISCO'S CAR - DAY

Francisco watches Ruiz and the agents walk up the street toward him.

FRANCISCO

(into phone)

They're going to walk right past me.

HELENA (V.O.)

What are you? A mouse? Get out of
the car and do it. This is your

chance.

Francisco watches the three men walk past his car. He makes a decision and opens his door.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Francisco steps from the car and mingles in with OTHER PEOPLE walking along the sidewalk. He follows them for few yards, picking his moment.

He closes the distance to Gordon, Castro and Ruiz, pulling a pistol from inside his jacket. He takes careful aim from twelve feet away and is about to shoot Ruiz when a bullet hole appears in his chest. He staggers, trying to squeeze the trigger, Francisco fires the gun once, wildly --

A tourist screams --

Gordon and Castro and Ruiz turn --

Francisco is looking down at the widening red splotch in the center of his shirt, uncertain of what has happened --

Gordon shoves Ruiz down into a doorway and fires three quick shots --

Francisco spins around and drops on his face in the street.

Citizens run in all directions fearing a psychopath with an NRA card coming off a bad week of day-trading --

Gordon and Castro with Ruiz beneath them scan the streets.

CASTRO

Stay here. I'll get the car.

Castro runs down the street for the court parking lot. Other AGENTS are running toward Gordon and Ruiz.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

The STRANGE MAN who threatened Helena's children packs a high-caliber rifle and scope into a briefcase.

He snaps the case shut and quickly exits the room. We notice a man on the floor with a bullet hole in his head next to the open door.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Agents surround Ruiz.

Gordon walks to the body of Francisco lying face down in the gutter. He turns him over with his shoe and sees his face.

GORDON

(to the other agents)

I saw this guy at the courthouse.

(beat)

The car --

Gordon takes off running, yelling for Castro.

EXT. COURT PARKING LOT - DAY

Castro has reached the car and gets in.

Gordon appears at the gate of the lot --

GORDON

(yelling)

No --

INT. CRUISER - DAY

Castro turns the ignition exactly at the moment he sees Gordon yelling and waving his arms --

EXT. COURT PARKING LOT - DAY

The cruiser EXPLODES.

Gordon hits the pavement. Parts of the car begin raining down around him.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. SIDEWALK CAFE - SAN DIEGO - DAY

A fire truck and paramedic unit WHIZZES by. Manolo sits at an outdoor cafe table, waiting. He can't help looking around at the attractive people, but he's also nervous.

Suddenly two MEN, recognizable as Salazar's OFFICERS from the desert drug bust, sitting at a nearby table, rise and move to Manolo's table.

MAN #1

Manolo, how are you?

They take seats uncomfortably close to Manolo.

MAN #2

Manolo, have we interrupted?

You're looking around like you're expecting someone.

MANOLO

No. I'm looking for the waiter. I want to order.

MAN #1

What are you gonna have?

MANOLO

A steak.

MAN #1

Well, if you like steak, we know a much better place. We'll take you there.

MANOLO

That's okay, really.

They each take Manolo by an arm.

MAN #2

Manolo, we should really be going now, before it gets too crowded.

INT. SUV - DAY

We're looking through the windshield as we approach the Mexican border. As the car slows, we pan to follow the border official as he looks in briefly and waves us through. We continue to pan to reveal Manolo in the backseat sitting beside Man #2.

INT. SUV - DAY

We're in the desert. There's nothing in any directions.

Javi is implacable. Manolo understands what is happening.

MANOLO

I was going to feed them wrong information. Feed them lies to... it was for...

The men say nothing. After a beat --

MANOLO

Don't tell Anna I died like this.
Tell her it was something else.
Tell her it was official business.
Tell her that I died doing something
honorable. Please, tell her that
for me...

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Javi and Manolo stand next to two freshly dug graves.

MAN #1

Turn around.

Javi hesitates before turning. We're on Javi as we hear the GUNSHOT. Javi doesn't flinch. Manolo's body falls into the grave.

Javi stands there, waiting.

MAN #1

You got anything you want to say?

Javi shakes his head. Finally, another GUNSHOT. After a beat, a hand reaches out of Javi's shoulder.

MAN #1

Sorry about that... we had to be
sure.

They walk back to the SUV.

SOMEBODY ELSE

Are you sure you don't have anything
to tell us?

Javi says nothing, doesn't even acknowledge them. We hear a GUNSHOT.

CUT TO:

INT. AYALA HOME - DAY

Arnie Metzger is in Helena's living room. The stereo is loudly playing MOZART.

ARNIE

That was a stupid thing you did.

Incredibly stupid.

HELENA

I tried, Arnie. And, I will continue to try.

ARNIE

Have you gone crazy? You are not Carl. You aren't as good as Carl.

(beat)

They are moving the trial to a high security location. The press has gone berserk. The jury will be influenced. Stay out of things. Let us try to win the case.

HELENA

That is going to be rather difficult when all the evidence is against us.

Helena steps closer to Arnie, close enough that her breasts are almost touching his chest.

ARNIE

Helena, please. This is out of your hands.

HELENA

(softly)

I know I made things worse. I know that and I'm sorry, but Arnie I need something from you. Something only you can help me with.

Helena looks searchingly into his eyes.

ARNIE

Helena --

HELENA

I need an introduction to the Obregon Brothers.

ARNIE

I can't do that.

Helena leans closer to him.

HELENA

I figured out what Carl was up to and I need your help. Will you help

me?

CUT TO:

EXT. LABORATORY RESEARCH FACILITIES - DAY

An establishing shot of a hi-tech company within shooting distance of the Salk Institute.

INT. LAB FACILITY - DAY

This is a professional chemical lab that can be rented by the month. Long tables of lab and computer equipment. Nobody has been here in a while. There are toys - plastic dolls, frisbees, hula hoops - on many of the tables.

Helena lets herself into the room. She scans ledgers. She looks over the equipment.

She picks up a twelve-inch high plastic Spastic Jack action figure and a can labeled "solvent" and hurries from the lab.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST END - CINCINNATI - NIGHT

Robert drives through the streets, searching for Caroline.

He doesn't find her.

INT. WAKEFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

Barbara is waiting in the living room. Robert enters. He shakes his head then stands silently for a beat.

ROBERT

About the other night, I'm sorry.

BARBARA

Me, too.

ROBERT

God, I don't get it. Are we supposed to say to ourselves, be prepared to lose her, be prepared to lose our child?

(beat)

Why does this happen to someone?

How does it happen?

BARBARA

I don't know.

INT. CAROLINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Robert is standing in the middle of her room. He's not sure what he's looking for. Everywhere he looks: her personal things, beloved objects from more innocent times, pictures.

Within moments a legitimate desire to connect with his daughter has escalated into a search for clues. He opens her drawers, dumps little boxes, pulls things off of shelves.

He becomes increasingly unhinged, flinging things around her room. He tosses a stack of magazines. A fashion magazine, airborne, discharges some contents: a lighter, a plastic tube and a piece of folded aluminum foil fluttering to the ground.

Robert stares at the foil on the carpet. It's charred on the outside. He picks it up. And unfolds it. There's a dried milky white substance.

He picks up the tube and lighter and stares at them. Then, somewhat tentatively, he puts the tube in his mouth. He holds the lighter under the foil, then heats the milky substance which turns translucent and disappears in a cloud of smoke. Robert sucks all of it in.

He waits a long time then exhales. His eyes shut. The tube drops from his mouth. He staggers and, overwhelmed by the sensations, sits on the bed. The lighter and foil fall from his hands.

A moment later he opens his eyes and doesn't seem to know where he is. He looks at the room, confused. He stumbles to the door and shuts it firmly behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. MANOLO'S HOUSE - DAY

Anna is weeping. Javier sits next to her. He puts his arm around her and she leans her head against his shoulder.

INT. JAVIER'S SUV - DAY

Javi drives through the streets of Tijuana. He brakes for a stop sign and watches, trance-like, the pedestrians crossing in front of him. As the intersection clears he remains still.

A HONK from behind brings him back and he pulls forward

passing Helena Ayala who crosses going the opposite direction.
We stay with her.

EXT. TIJUANA - DAY

Helena walks down a nightlife street that is tawdry and stale
in the midday sun.

OMITTED

INT. CLUB PLATINUM - DAY

A shrewd Obregon Lieutenant, JUAN MARQUEZ, 40, sits at a
table opposite Helena. The Strange Man who both threatened
Helena's child and executed Francisco sits in another chair.

MARQUEZ

Mrs. Ayala. Thank you for coming.
I am Juan Marquez, I work for Mr.
Obregon. I believe you know my
associate, "Tigrillo," the Little
Tiger.

Helena nods to Tigrillo --

HELENA

Yes, he threatened to kill my five
year-old son.

(beat)

I was under the impression I would
be meeting Juan Obregon.

MARQUEZ

No, this is not possible. And I
thank you for coming down here, though
I suspect it's been a pointless
journey.

HELENA

Why do you say that, Mr. Marquez?

MARQUEZ

I hear these stories. Your husband
in jail. His business in chaos.
Various people fighting over the
scraps.

HELENA

My husband is the victim of an
informer in your organization, not
ours.

MARQUEZ

That is not true, Mrs. Ayala. Your route is compromised. Perhaps it is time for me to deal with other distributors in California.

HELENA

I don't think you're going to do that.

MARQUEZ

You don't? Listen to this woman in a man's world, a very violent world.

HELENA

There are plenty of other suppliers in Mexico.

MARQUEZ

But not in whose interest it is to help you out of debt.

Helena reaches into her bag and pulls out the Spastic Jack action figure. She puts it on the desk.

HELENA

My husband had been working on something he called, The Project for the Children. Are you aware of this?

MARQUEZ

I don't know. Perhaps I remember something.

HELENA

We have the ability to change the color, odor, and physical property of cocaine.

MARQUEZ

You want to smuggle narcotics in Mr. Espastico Jacobo. That's nothing new.

HELENA

Not in...

Juan Marquez is confused.

HELENA

This doll is cocaine.

Juan picks up Spastic Jack and looks at him. He bangs it on the desk.

HELENA

Every part, from his ears to his accessory belt, is high-impact, pressure-molded cocaine. Odorless. Undetectable by dogs. Undetectable by anyone.

MARQUEZ

I don't believe you.

She takes out the "solvent" and puts it on his desk.

HELENA

Get a bowl.

INT. CLUB PLATINUM - OFFICE - LATER

Spastic Jack is slowly dissolving in a bowl of solvent. Only his shoulders, head, and ridiculous ears remain above the quicksand of milky glop.

Helena holds a mirror under the desk lamp. She is drying the paste. She puts the mirror on the desk. A white substance has coagulated there.

HELENA

Try it.

Juan takes out a razor blade and chops the dried substance into two white powder lines. He hands a silver straw to Helena.

MARQUEZ

You first.

HELENA

I'm six months pregnant. I won't do it.

MARQUEZ

Fine, then we don't have deal.

HELENA

Fine, then we don't have a deal.

She stands. He watches her a beat, then smiles.

MARQUEZ

Okay, okay.

He leans down and quickly snorts a line. After a beat.

MARQUEZ

That's good coke.

HELENA

It should be... It's yours.

(beat)

I want our debt forgiven. I want to be the exclusive distributor of Obregon Brothers Cocaine for the United States. And I want the principle witness against my husband, Eduardo Ruiz, killed.

MARQUEZ

Perhaps... Perhaps... I'm afraid I must first ask you to pass a test. I asked the same of your husband and he succeeded with flying colors.

Helena waits. Juan Marquez reaches in his desk and pulls out a quarter kilo of cocaine. He pushes it across the desk.

MARQUEZ

Take this back with you. Deliver it safely to Tigrillo in San Diego and we have a deal.

HELENA

That's crazy. My husband is on trial for smuggling.

MARQUEZ

Exactly, and this is how I know I'm not getting into business with the U.S. Government.

She puts the quarter key in her bag and stands.

HELENA

You will help me with my other problem.

MARQUEZ

Deliver that safely to Tigrillo in San Diego. And we have a deal.

Tigrillo escorts her out of the room.

INT. CLUB PLATINUM - DAY

Helena follows Tigrillo. As they pass the restrooms she signals that she has to stop.

INT. CLUB PLATINUM - LADIES' ROOM - DAY

Helena goes into a stall. She extracts the cocaine from her handbag.

She looks at it, trying to figure out where it goes. She hikes up her skirt.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Javier is hooked up to a polygraph machine watched closely by a POLYGRAPH OPERATOR. Hughes and Johnson watch as Javi talks into a tape recorder on the table.

JAVIER

...And I have the electronic serial numbers for their cellular phones. They change them every twenty-four hours but I have a contact at MexTel who can get me the new ESNs within twelve.

Javi finishes talking and sits back. Agent Hughes shuts off the tape recorder and looks at the polygraph operator who nods approval. Hughes and Johnson exchange a look. They are dumbstruck.

HUGHES

That's good shit.

JAVIER

Now that you have what you want,
let's talk about how I get what I
want.

JOHNSON

Oh, don't worry, Javier, you're not
gonna have any problems there.

HUGHES

I want to take a minute and talk
about what type of precautions you're
taking to protect yourself. When
Salazar and Madrigal go down, they
might send someone to see you.

JAVIER

You worry about getting me the things
that I want. I'll worry about myself.

There's a beat. Javier seems discomfited. The two agents
notice this and exchange looks.

JOHNSON

You should feel good about this.

JAVIER

I feel like a traitor.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. BORDER CROSSING AUTOMOBILE CHECKPOINT - DAY

Javi goes into Mexico. Pan over to Helena's Mercedes.

INT. HELENA'S CAR - DAY

She inches the car forward towards the officer who selects
vehicles for inspection. The car ahead of her passes through
and speeds away. The OFFICER flags Helena and directs her
into the search facility.

EXT. CUSTOMS SEARCH BAY - DAY

Helena pulls into a search bay.

A CUSTOMS OFFICER watches Helena lower her window.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Please step from the car, Ma'am.

HELENA

I'm in a hurry --

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Step from the car, Ma'am. This won't take long from your day.

Helena gets out of her car.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CUSTOMS CHECKPOINT - DAY

There is a bank of video monitors showing the scenes all over the facility.

ON THE MONITOR: Helena's car is on a lift three feet off the ground. Officers pour over the inside and undercarriage of the Mercedes.

Nearby, A GERMAN SHEPHERD sniffs at the items that have been removed from the car: bags, spare tire, cd boxes.

EXT. CUSTOMS SEARCH BAY - DAY

Customs OFFICERS approach Helena --

OFFICER

Ma'am, we have to ask you to come with us.

She follows them toward the Customs building.

INT. STRIP SEARCH ROOM - DAY

A FEMALE CUSTOMS INSPECTOR accompanied by a female SUPERVISORY INSPECTOR leads Helena into a sterile room where there is no place to hide anything.

CUSTOMS MATRON

Ma'am, we have reason to believe you may have illegal drugs hidden beneath your clothing. I need to conduct a pat down search. Supervisory Inspector Haig will witness the search.

HELENA

You've got to be kidding me. I'm pregnant. What if I refuse?

CUSTOMS MATRON

This pamphlet explains the law and your rights under it. You're welcome to read it first. It says we have the authority to conduct this search. Would you like to read it first or shall we proceed?

EXT. FUNERAL SERVICE - DAY

Hundreds of DEA AGENTS, spouses, others stand around a grave in a leafy cemetery in working class San Diego.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The funeral is over and people are filing back to the cars. Gordon walks away from the service when he is approached by a mourning LUCINDA CASTRO, the mother of the deceased.

MRS. CASTRO

Montel... Oh, Montel.

Gordon hugs her.

MRS. CASTRO

You know how much he cared about you. You do, don't you?

GORDON

Yes.

MRS. CASTRO

I know if he could have it back somehow, he wouldn't do it differently or have it any other way. He wouldn't. He loved his job.

Another AGENT hustles toward him from the other direction, the direction of the cars.

AGENT

Excuse me, Agent Gordon. Mrs. Castro.

(to Gordon)

Helena Ayala left Club Platinum in Tijuana. The Obregon Brothers' place.

They stopped her at the border but she was clean. She's in San Diego now.

Gordon runs for his car.

CUT TO:

INT. ARNIE METZGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Arnie sits in his office, spacing out, admiring his view when an ASSISTANT shows Helena in. As soon as the door shuts --

HELENA

Did you get it?

ARNIE

What are you thinking, calling me at home with a message like that? You've compromised me and our relationship --

Helena sits confidently on his couch.

HELENA

(making fun of Arnie)

The place is swept twice a day. I learned that down in Miami in '85...

(hard)

Arnie. I'm the housewife. I belong to the most exclusive country club in La Jolla that accepts Latinos. Until recently, I believed my husband imported hydroponic strawberries, which I donated at the school fair.

Arnie reaches into a desk drawer and pulls out a quarter-kilo baggy identical to the one Juan Obregon gave her in Tijuana.

HELENA

It's the same stuff? From the rainy day stash?

ARNIE

It's the same. What happened to what they gave you?

Helena puts the bag in her purse.

HELENA

I'm desperate, but I'm not stupid.

I flushed it in the bathroom of their godawful nightclub.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. ROBERT AND BARBARA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Robert sleeps in his clothes on top of the covers. Barbara is asleep beside him. The phone rings. Robert answers. Barbara watches.

ROBERT

Hello.

SHERIDAN (V.O.)

I'm sorry... Did I wake you?

Robert looks at Barbara and shakes his head. She gets up.

ROBERT

No, it's all right.

There's a beat.

SHERIDAN (V.O.)

Salazar's been taken down. He was working for Porfirio Madrigal.

ROBERT

What? I thought Madrigal was dead. I thought it was verified.

SHERIDAN (V.O.)

Apparently not. Look, it's a shit storm here right now. When are you coming back?

(beat)

I don't know what to tell people any more.

ROBERT

I'll get there as soon as I can.

SHERIDAN (V.O.)

If we're moving the press conference, we need to do it now.

(beat)

Are you all right?

BARBARA (V.O.)

Robert.

The tone in Barbara's voice causes him to look up. She holds an empty jewelry box.

ROBERT

(to Sheridan)

I have to call you back.

INT. DINING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

The drawers and cabinets are open. Barbara and Robert assess what is missing.

BARBARA

The silver wedding cup.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Robert looks at their home entertainment center. Barbara enters this room.

BARBARA

My Leica's gone.

ROBERT

So's the video camera.

BARBARA

At least she's alive.

Robert turns for the door.

BARBARA

Where are you going?

ROBERT

She'll be at a pawn shop in an hour.

Ten minutes after that she'll be at her dealer's. If I find him, maybe I find her.

INT. CLASSROOM - CINCINNATI COUNTRY DAY - DAY

The bored children of privilege, wearing their blazers or uniform grey skirts, stare at a TEACHER behind a desk.

The door opens and Robert enters. He finds Seth Abrahms in the back of the class and walks straight to him. Robert grabs a fistful of shirt and tie.

SETH

Hey man, what are you doing?

TEACHER (O.S.)

Excuse me? Excuse me?

Robert yanks Seth out of his seat. The teacher is approaching.

ROBERT

Seth has to be excused. He's going on a field trip.

INT. THE FUN ZONE - DAY

Helena watches David play a video game. They have finished their lunch, a mess of pizza rinds.

HELENA

Come on. Time to go.

The CLOWN tries to catch their attention with some mime, but they ignore him.

EXT. THE FUN ZONE - DAY

Helena and David are pushing out the door. The man walking the other way past them is Tigrillo from the Tijuana cartel. As they pass --

HELENA

(under her breath)

Women's room, stall two.

(loud)

Should we stop for ice-cream?

DAVID

Yeah!

Tigrillo disappears into the restaurant.

As Helena pulls out of the Fun Zone parking lot, an unmarked DEA cruiser falls in behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - DAY

Robert and Seth are parked across the street from Sketch's building. They watch people, mostly white people, get what

they need.

SETH

I don't know, maybe we missed her.

ROBERT

I can't believe you used to bring my daughter here, to this place.

SETH

Hey man, back the fuck up. To this place. What's that shit? Right now, all over this country, a hundred thousand white people from the suburbs are driving around downtown asking every black person they see, You got any drugs? You know where I can get drugs? What kind of effect you think this has on the psyche of a black person, on their possibilities? If you sent a hundred thousand black people into your neighborhood, Indian Hills, and they asked every white person they saw, hey, you got any drugs?, within a day, your friends and their kids would be selling. It's market forces, man. The product's marked up three hundred percent. You can go out on the street and make five hundred bucks in two hours and then do whatever you want for the rest of the day. You think white people would still be going to law school?

There's a beat.

ROBERT

You're starting to piss me off. Get out of the car.

Robert and Seth get out of the car and walk across the street.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Robert and Seth stand in the dim, dingy hallway. A JUNKIE leaves.

SETH

You're gonna get me killed.

Robert shoves Seth toward the door. Seth knocks. The door opens a crack and Sketch's face appears.

SKETCH

What do you want?

Robert moves around Seth.

ROBERT

I'm looking for my daughter, Caroline.
She comes here.

SKETCH

This is a business. Get the fuck
outta here.

ROBERT

I need to find my daughter. I'll
pay you.

Sketch pulls a gun and shoves it against Robert's cheek.

SKETCH

Who the fuck do you think you are?
Where the fuck do you think you are?
Why the fuck do you think I shouldn't
just put you in a dumpster?

ROBERT

I have money --

SKETCH

I got money.

ROBERT

I'll pay you a thousand dollars. I
have it in my wallet.

SKETCH

I want your money, I'll take your
money.

ROBERT

Just tell me where she is.

Sketch pushes Robert back into the hall. Sketch sees Seth lurking there.

SKETCH

(to Seth)
Don't do that shit again.

Sketch slams the door in their face.

SETH

Great. What a good idea.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Seth and Robert walk to the car.

SETH

Man, I'm telling you. Don't do this vigilante thing. Either the cops find her or she'll call you. I promise.

Robert looks at him, carefully.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANOLO'S HOUSE - DAY

Javier KNOCKS on the front door. There is no answer. The shades are drawn. The house is darkened.

JAVIER

(calling out)

Anna. Anna, please. Let me in.

He KNOCKS again.

JAVIER

Come on. You can't stay locked in your house all day.

Finally, the door cracks open. Anna has clearly not been out of the house since the last time we saw her.

INT. MANOLO'S HOUSE - DAY

Javier sits opposite Anna.

JAVIER

I know this is a tragedy, but you have to realize that good has come out of it.

She looks at him.

JAVIER

If Manolo hadn't gone and told them

what he did then Salazar and Madrigal would never have been brought to justice. He did a great thing for Tijuana. He did a great thing for Mexico.

ANNA

I want to believe you. I really do.

JAVIER

You will believe me, because it's true.

EXT. SKETCH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Seth walks up the steps and into the building. A beat later he reappears and continues down the street.

Robert emerges from across the street and follows at a guarded distance.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Seth walks along the seedy neighborhood street. He approaches the Villa Elaine. He turns up the steps and disappears inside.

Robert follows him.

INT. VILLA ELAINE HALLWAY - DAY

Robert ascends the stairs. As he enters the hallway he sees Seth pounding on one of the doors.

SETH

Open the door. Open the fucking door, man.

A MAN'S VOICE comes from the other side of the door.

MUFFLED VOICE

Go away!

Robert closes the distance. Seth pounds harder.

SETH

I know she's in there. Let me talk to her.

MUFFLED VOICE

I don't know what you're talking

about. Go away!

Robert reaches the door. Seth sees him.

SETH

I know she's in there.

Robert kicks the door in.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Robert sees a middle-aged JOHN in his underwear and a dress shirt.

JOHN

Hey, I haven't touched her --

Caroline is passed out on the bed. Robert goes to her as the John scrambles for his clothes.

She stirs and sees him --

CAROLINE

(really out of it)

Hi, Daddy.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - DAY

Caroline rides in the passenger seat. She's come out of her stupor and is now filled with ebullience.

CAROLINE

It's gonna be great... I mean, I'm okay and all, because, see, I met a guy, he's in this pretty famous band and...

(gets up confessional courage)

They've invited me to write lyrics for them, I'm gonna be able to do that and maybe sing, too... not at first, but later.

Caroline gets lost in her grandiose vision. Robert looks over at her as she drifts off into a nod. A moment later she's awake and rambling again.

CAROLINE

(sounding completely crazy)

I've been doing research for the

school paper, that's what I've been doing, like on assignment kind-of, I've seen some stuff you wouldn't believe, but I'm gonna write it all down into lyrics. They think I'm really good, everybody says so, what do you think?

Robert fights back tears. He reaches over and takes his daughter's hand.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

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INT. CLUB PLATINUM OFFICE - DAY

Juan Marquez sits across the desk from Javi. Tigrillo and PABLO, 30's, are also in the meeting.

MARQUEZ

Salazar and Madrigal are no longer with us.

(beat)

A feat none of these people could get accomplished.

Juan nods toward Pablo and Tigrillo.

MARQUEZ

You're going to be made the Special Assistant to the new drug Czar, which makes you a very valuable law enforcement officer.

(beat)

I hope you like to travel because we have plans for Juarez and El Paso,

Nogales, Sinaloa, Jalisco,
Michoacan...

Javi just stares at him for a long moment, then looks off.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBERT'S OFFICE IN WASHINGTON - DAY

Robert on the telephone.

ROBERT
(into phone)
How was she?

INT. BARBARA'S OFFICE - DAY

A cramped, messy office at the Environmental Protection Agency. Barbara is on the phone.

BARBARA
(into phone)
I'm really not sure. She seemed to recognize it wasn't Serenity Oaks. It's a pretty hard-core facility, but at least we know where she is.
(beat)
Maybe it's what she needs now.

INTERCUT ROBERT IN HIS OFFICE

He holds the phone and doesn't say anything.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - EARLY MORNING

The court is searched carefully by a phalanx of OFFICERS. Metal Detectors are checked. Bomb sniffing German Shepherds are led through the space.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - MORNING

The agents are unkempt and everyone is tired. Ruiz moves through a cluttered room in a bathrobe with a cup of coffee.

An agent shows him a morning paper --

AGENT
Big day.
(shows picture in

paper)
You're a star.

Ruiz walks over and sits across from Gordon, switching off the radio show he's listening to. Gordon looks up from his paper.

GORDON
Go shower. You smell.

There is a KNOCK on the front door. An AGENT goes to answer --

AGENT
Who is it?

SOMEBODY (V.O.)
(through the door)
The Mafia. I've got his breakfast.

The agent opens the door and is handed a breakfast tray. He puts the food in front of Ruiz who uncovers the sausage and eggs.

An agent walking by tries to take a bite of sausage. Ruiz stabs it with a fork --

RUIZ
Fuck off.

Gordon watches the interchange --

GORDON
Where's the love gone, Eddie?

You'll be testifying for at least ten days. What if we stop feeding you?

Ruiz begins to eat hungrily.

RUIZ
You expect me to be grateful for spending the rest of my life looking over my shoulder.

GORDON
That thought makes me feel awful.

Ruiz pushes eggs into a piece of toast.

RUIZ
Can't you for a second imagine none

of this had happened? That my drugs had gone through. What would have been the harm? A few people get high who are getting high anyway. Your partner is still alive. We avoid having breakfast together. Don't you see this means nothing? That your whole life is pointless?

GORDON

You're breaking my heart.

RUIZ

The worst thing about you, Monty, is you realize the futility of what you're doing and you do it anyway. I wish you could see how transparent you are.

(disgusted)

This food tastes like shit.

GORDON

So go shower already.

RUIZ

You only got to me because you were tipped off by the Juarez Cartel, who's trying to break into Tijuana. You're helping them.

(beat)

You work for a drug dealer too, Monty.

Ruiz stands and heads for the bathroom.

GORDON

(yelling after him)

And shave. You better look nice and believable for the jury.

Ruiz disappears into the bathroom and slams the door behind him.

GORDON

(to another agent)

It's like having another wife.

The agent laughs. There's another KNOCK on the door.

GORDON

Who is it?

SOMEBODY ELSE (V.O.)
(though the door)
Breakfast.

Gordon and the agent look at each other.

SOMEBODY ELSE
Hurry up. It's getting cold.

Gordon moves to the side of the door and pulls his gun. The other agent opens the door.

A MAN with a breakfast tray enters. Gordon puts the gun to the side of his head.

MAN WITH TRAY
I'm on your side. God, you're jumpy.

Gordon is momentarily confused, then goes for the bathroom door.

GORDON
Call an ambulance. Hurry.

Gordon tries the bathroom door. It's stuck. He gets it open a crack. There's a body against the other side. He shoves.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ruiz is on the floor in convulsions.

GORDON
(yelling)
Call the ambulance.
(to Ruiz)
Don't die on me. You will not die on me. Do you hear me? Don't you die on me.

Ruiz's convulsions get worse, his claw-like fingers scratch across the tile.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. COURTROOM - SAN DIEGO - DAY

The court is packed. Helena and Arnie watch from the gallery. The judge is at the bench.

The prosecutor rises --

PROSECUTOR

Your honor, ladies and gentlemen of the jury... Because of the sudden death of Eduardo Ruiz, the people have decided that at this point we cannot continue our case against Carl Ayala.

The court ERUPTS. Reporters scatter. Helena cheers.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. WHITE HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Robert Wakefield enters the office of the Chief of Staff, who looks up from what he's doing, which is reading Robert's report, and is already mid-sentence.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Yeah, hi --

(waves Robert to a chair)

So I've got a copy of your speech here...

(glances down, still reading)

It's fantastic... So, Robert, my genuine thanks. You're my choice and you're gonna be great. The President is sorry he hasn't been able to spend more time with you. After the press conference he wants to really sit down.

(an afterthought)

Oh, I got to the Post, too. Don't worry about that thing with your daughter, it's not news; they're willing to treat it as a family matter, a personal matter.

(off Robert's stare)

Look, even if it came out, we'd turn it into a qualification, I've been in the trenches of this Drug War, I have seen the face of the enemy, etcetera.

Robert just stares at him.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

General Salazar sits in the same grimy cell that housed Francisco Flores. He is sweating and his breathing is labored. A DOCTOR enters and gives him an injection, explaining that it will calm him down.

EXT. DESERT OUTSIDE TIJUANA - DAY

It's a reprise of the earlier desert bust... a landing strip in the middle of nowhere, a plane landing, SUV's approaching.

This time Javi is at the wheel of one of them. News crews are trailing behind him.

EXT. DESERT AIRSTRIP - LATER

Javi and Special Agent Hughes stand next to a giant mound of seized cocaine, the same cocaine, in fact, Javi held briefly at the beginning. The same teenagers from the pickup truck have been arrested. The news crews get everything.

JAVIER

(to the press)

This seizure is one of the largest seizures in Mexican history... It represents the first bilateral effort of the American DEA and the Mexican I.N.C.D.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

General Salazar lies on his side, eyes and mouth open. He is dead. Javier looks at him through the doorway.

JAVIER (V.O. CONT'D)

Today I'm very proud to announce that Mexico, with the help of our American partners, is finally winning the war against narcotics trafficking.

The PRESS begins shouting questions --

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. HEADQUARTERS, I.N.C.D. - MEXICO - DAY

Robert and Javi walk through the headquarters, a nondescript government building.

Robert extracts photographs of the bust from a manila envelope. The crates of cocaine are clearly marked "911."

ROBERT

The cocaine brand, 911, is an East Coast brand, a Juarez Cartel brand, and you must know it usually comes through into El Paso?

JAVIER

I'm aware of that.

ROBERT

So what's it doing in Tijuana?

Javi looks Robert Wakefield squarely in the eye. He shrugs.

ROBERT

Let me ask you a hypothetical question: if Salazar worked for Madrigal and the Juarez cartel, and he went out of power, would it mean the Juarez Cartel is losing influence?

JAVIER

It could mean that, yes.

ROBERT

That would probably mean the Tijuana Cartel is gaining power?

JAVIER

It's possible.

ROBERT

Is it possible to have a Drug Czar in Mexico who isn't connected in some way to one of the cartels?

Javi thinks along time before answering.

JAVIER

Yeah, it's possible... if you're prepared to die.

CUT TO:

EXT. AYALA FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

An outdoor party is going on. Children and adults arrive and mingle. Caterers work the barbecue grill. Waiters serve food and drink on the rolling lawn.

Helena circles through the crowd greeting friends. She looks past her tree line and up the street where a telephone repair van is parked. She turns back toward her guests. Somebody has raised a cup and everyone is CHEERING.

Helena drinks with her guests, then walks inside her house.

AT THE FRONT GATE

Montel Gordon walks through the gate and up the drive. He grabs a drink off the tray of a passing waiter. He appears drunk.

Montel follows Helena into the house.

INT. CARL'S PRIVATE STUDY - AFTERNOON

Carl hears the CHEERING outside and the sound of LAUGHTER.

He makes a cellular telephone call.

INT. ARNIE METZGER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Arnie is in his office and answers the cell phone --

CARLOS (V.O.)

It's Saturday, Arnie. You work too hard.

ARNIE

Carl, I'm running late. I'm coming right now --

Behind Arnie in the office there is a movement of SHADOW.

INT. CARL'S PRIVATE STUDY - AFTERNOON

Carl stands at the window looking at his guests while he talks on the phone --

CARLOS

Don't bother.

ARNIE (V.O.)

What?

CARLOS

So Arnie, when were you going to tell me about the 3 million dollars we got in from San Francisco two days after I got arrested?

ARNIE (V.O.)

I was just waiting for the right time.

CARLOS

And you didn't feel like you could trust my wife with this news?

ARNIE (V.O.)

I just didn't want to take a chance. I didn't want to risk it. It could have been frozen along with everything else.

CARLOS

You had it all figured out. You move into my house. You raise my kids. You sleep with my wife. It was a good plan, Arnie.

ARNIE (V.O.)

Carl, that's insane.

CARLOS

So my wife is lying?

ARNIE (V.O.)

Carl, think about it, if I was trying to rip you off, I would have left town after Ruiz was killed. I wouldn't sit next to you in court listening to the dismissal.

On the front lawn CHILDREN are lined up for the ice-cream sundae bar that is being tended by a WAITER.

CARLOS

Arnie, do think there's a difference between a reason and an excuse, because I don't think there is.

ARNIE (V.O.)

Carl --

CARLOS

Goodbye Arnie.

INT. ARNIE METZGER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Arnie turns around and there are TWO MEN in his office.

INT. CARL'S PRIVATE STUDY - AFTERNOON

Carl hears MUFFLED GUNSHOTS over the phone. He hangs up and turns from the window. Helena is standing there.

HELENA

Who was that?

CARLOS

Arnie. He's not going to be able to make the barbecue.

Carl and Helena share an embrace and a kiss.

HELENA

Come downstairs. Everyone is waiting.

Carl and Helena turn to leave the room and Montel Gordon is standing in the doorway with his glass of champagne.

GORDON

Hello, Helena. What a great party.

CARLOS

Who are you?

GORDON

Nobody. I'm a nobody who arrested you, but your wife is a murderer.

Gordon takes a sip of his drink. Two SECURITY OFFICERS appear in the doorway behind him.

SECURITY OFFICER

Hey, you can't be in here.

GORDON

I'm a cop.

SECURITY OFFICER

I don't care.

HELENA

(to the guards)
Throw him out of here.

The security officers grab Gordon. There is a scuffle.
Gordon falls to the floor by the window. They are wrestling.

As they wrestle, Gordon reaches out and, unnoticed, affixes
TINY LISTENING DEVICE underneath the desk.

He continues to struggle with the guards. Helena and Carlos
start from the room.

GORDON
(calling out)
You didn't win, Helena. You lost
everything. Tell your children a
nice bedtime story... How you killed
my partner.

EXT. AYALA FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

The guests watch as the guards eject Gordon from the premises.

Near the gate David has stopped playing to watch the action.

Then he goes back to playing with his toy: a Spastic Jack
figure.

CUT TO:

EXT. VERDANT NEIGHBORHOOD - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Javi and his convoy of armored SUV's pull up in front of the
beautiful house where earlier he deposited Rosario, Salazar's
former mistress.

Javier opens the front door and Rosario greets him by throwing
her arms around his neck. They disappear inside.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROOM - DAY

The PRESS SECRETARY stands at the familiar podium addressing
the White House Press Corps.

Robert Wakefield stands to one side with Chief of Staff, his
lawyers, Sheridan and General Landry.

PRESS SECRETARY
...a sterling reputation and close

friend of the President, recently confirmed into The Office of National Drug Control Policy... our new Drug Czar, Robert Hudson Wakefield.

Applause from the assembled PRESS. The Press Secretary signals and Robert walks to the podium. He looks back to the Chief of Staff; he stares out at the expectant faces and television lights and camera flashes.

ROBERT

(reading his prepared speech)

The War on Drugs is a war on our nation's most precious resource... our children. Sixty-eight million children have been targeted by those who perpetrate this war and protecting those children must be priority number one.

(beat)

There has been progress and there have been failures, but where we have fallen short I see not a problem but an opportunity.

Robert is becoming increasingly uneasy. He glances at the Chief of Staff who bores into him. He looks again at his speech. With great effort he continues.

ROBERT

An opportunity to correct the mistakes of the past while laying a solid foundation for the future.

(a long, uncomfortable beat)

This takes not only new ideas, but perseverance. This takes not only resources, but courage. This takes not only government, but families.

Robert stops again as though the words are choking him.

ROBERT

I've... I've outlined a ten-point plan, representing a new bilateral effort...

He can't finish. Everyone stares at Robert. The crowd of reporters senses something is wrong.

ROBERT

I can't do this.

(beat)

If there is a War on Drugs then our own families have become the enemy. How can you wage war on your own family?

He walks out of the room. The crowd waits, expecting him to return.

Robert walks down a corridor and out of the White House.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

A beautiful spring morning. He walks down to Pennsylvania Avenue. He hails a cab and gets in. The cab pulls away.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

A twelve step meeting is in progress. Caroline shares from her seat.

CAROLINE

On the good days I feel like I get it, like it all makes sense. I can stay in the moment. I don't have to control everything in the future. And I believe everything is going to work out fine.

(beat)

On the bad days, I just want to grab the phone and start dialing numbers. I want to pull my hair and run through the streets screaming.

(beat)

But, thanks to the people I've met in these rooms, people like Margaret and Jim and Sarah, people who've taught me how to listen, I'm pretty sure I'll make it through today.

Caroline is finished sharing.

VOICE (O.S.)

Would you like to share?

We pan over to reveal Robert and Barbara sitting next to Caroline.

ROBERT

My name is Robert. This is my wife,
Barbara. We're Caroline's parents.
We're just here to listen.

CUT TO:

OMIT.

EXT. AYALA HOME - NIGHT

The house is dark and silent. The van is parked up the
street.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Gordon listens through a headset, his expression set.

CARLOS (V.O.)
(over a listening
device)
We're back up and running.
Completely untouchable. Completely.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - TIJUANA - DAY

A bank of lights CRANKS on. Then ANOTHER and ANOTHER.

In a wider shot we see an illuminated baseball field where a
children's pickup game is in progress.

In the crowd, Javi serenely watches the game.

THE END